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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

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Reverse in Tunisia

The fact that the United States Army, in its first contact with a Rommel who was supposed to have been on the run to escape destruction by the British, has been forced to give ground rapidly instead of driving the Germans into the sea, is not only a disappointment but a shock to the pride of Americans. There are many excuses, and no one thinks of questioning the bravery of our soldiers. But we are not looking for excuses. It is only just to record the fact, however, that the blame probably rests not with the army at all but with our diplomacy, both in the present and in the past few years.

The line which Rommel broke through was only lightly held, and could at any time have been pierced by any considerable concentration which the Germans might have been able to throw against it. The reason more troops and armor were not available to hold this line, or to back it up, was the necessity of keeping powerful forces on the frontier of Spanish Morocco. And the reason our forces had to be so disposed was that the policy of appeasing Franco has been a failure. There are indications that Hitler is mobilizing for a powerful offensive through Spain into Africa; we cannot afford to run the risk of being surprised in the rear. Whether he does so or not, we must accumulate larger forces for a successful offensive in Africa than would be the case if Spain were not fascist, and the campaign is likely to be a long and bloody affair. Now the bitter payment is being exacted from American boys for the betrayal of the Spanish republic by the United States, Britain and France.

The Political Front

Politically, too, the battle in Tunisia will be long and hard—if we engage in it. Peyrouton has appointed to important posts a number of men who were somewhat less fanatically collaborationist than those they replace, but who cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called democrats. Giraud has announced that French Jews will again be admitted to the army, but only on certain conditions: Jewish officers must have been wounded to regain the posts from which Vichy ousted them; Jewish soldiers must be "favorably known," which means, we suppose, politically safe, if they are to be taken back. In a recent speech Peyrouton praised Churchill and foreshadowed economic reforms but said nothing whatever about political democracy.

Perhaps the best news comes from General Bergeret, General Giraud's deputy, who announced last week that 200 French nationals and about 1,000 "political suspects" would be set free within two months. Yet release comes discouragingly slowly, and the number still held is at least five and perhaps ten or twelve times the number freed. Furthermore, those released are apparently to be allowed to work, but not to fight. We wish we could believe the report that veterans of the Spanish civil war are fighting side by side with French, British and American troops in Tunisia, but until it is officially confirmed we prefer to be skeptical.

Gandhi and the British Mind

The situation in India, long a tragic one, has risen to a new climax of tragedy with Mr. Gandhi, on Tuesday of this week, apparently in imminent danger of

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death on the fourteenth day of his three weeks' fast. If he dies, as may have happened before these lines are read, the gulf between the British and Indians will have been immeasurably widened and deepened. For a long time, British policy toward India has seemed to be the work of men of inferior minds, lacking in true realism, common sense and imagination. A great part of the British difficulty has been quite needless, brought on by themselves because they insisted on a cold policy of legalism with no appreciation of the human values involved.

McKellar Wants Patronage

Of all the reckless fools now running wild in Congress, Senator McKellar of Tennessee most deserves the iron cross. He is supporting a measure, which is reported to have a good chance of passage, requiring that all government employees receiving salaries above $4,500 be confirmed by the Senate before they can draw pay or function. Thus at one stroke he would, on the date when the measure goes into effect, decapitate the executive branch of the government and the war organization. There are, it is estimated, more than 30,000 persons involved. It would take the Senate months to examine all their cases, even if it did nothing else and devoted only a few minutes to each. The purpose of the bill is of course to substitute appointment by political patronage for appointment on the basis of merit. Its immediate result would be paralysis of the nation's capacity to fight; its ultimate result would be the deterioration of the executive personnel in the interest of a huge spoils system.

Senator McKellar in introducing this bill is satisfying an old grudge against the administration because the Tennessee Valley Authority in appointing its staff would not make concessions to his demand for patronage. We do not expect him to exhibit either the public conscience or the intelligence to abandon it. But is it not about time for the more responsible Senators to put the emergency brakes on a national legislative body which is so eager to fight the President that it has forgotten all about fighting the enemies of the country?

How to Collect Taxes

The battle over the Ruml plan is, among other things, a struggle between realists and idealists, between opportunists and those who would stick to a principle at any cost. The blunt fact, which the Treasury Department is loath to admit, is that as things are now, millions of taxpayers are going to be in arrears on this year's tax payments on 1942 incomes because they haven't saved up enough money. We strongly doubt whether any country in the world has ever tried to collect such large taxes without taking them at the source. Everyone agrees that in the future, taxes should be collected in this way; the only dispute is over the question of how to get to the new basis.

The opponents of the present version of the Ruml plan (there have been several) object to it because of the situation they think it would create for two or three hundred wealthy men. These men, they say, have already saved up the money with which to pay last year's taxes this year. It is argued that if last year's taxes are "canceled," those who have accumulated reserves to pay them will have "windfalls" aggregating several hundred million dollars. The fact is, of course, that these reserves will be used to pay taxes due in 1943, whether these taxes are calculated on the basis of 1942 incomes or on those currently received. This year the same men must either accumulate new reserves to meet the 1944 taxes, or pay that much more out of 1944 income, when next year's taxes are due. Nobody would get any windfalls by virtue of the Ruml plan.

What the Treasury is really after is to collect as much in 1943 as possible; the real question is how many can pay two years' taxes in one. If we tried to divide up last year's taxes and pay them over the next two or three years, the average man, who will just barely be able to meet this year's burden, if that, will certainly be unable to carry the additional load. Money would be borrowed from banks or from loan sharks on an unprecedented scale and with a highly inflationary tendency. Anything that could be usefully accomplished by this method could equally well be accomplished by an increase of rates, if the Ruml plan were adopted.

Finland's Peace Feelers

A Stockholm report from George Axelsson in The New York Times states that Finland is preparing to get out of the war. As the high tide of the German army recedes, Finland seems destined to become a deserted island behind the Russian-German front. Axelsson reports that Vaino A. Tanner, boss of the Social Democratic Party, engineered the recent "reëlection" of President Risto Ryti for the purpose of forming a new Cabinet to approach Moscow for peace terms. Ryti was not reëlected by popular suffrage, but by delegates who were chosen several years ago.

Many Americans would feel a sense of relief to have Finland out of the war; not only because this would represent an important military victory, but also because we built up Finland for twenty years in our political thinking as a wonderful little country. Even now the Times story points out that Finland has been considered Germany's "only decent friend." These facts serve as a reminder how mixed-up most of us have been about Finland in recent years. We did not see her as a military threat, and a probable ally of Germany, lying athwart a vital Russian flank—all of which she was—but as a brave little country, whose people we admired, whose athletes and leading musical composer and whose prompt interest payments on a small debt appealed to our national sentiment; and truth

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fully, these things did represent admirable elements of the Finnish national character. What most of us lost sight of, during those months of the Russo-Finnish war, when Robert Sherwood's play "There Shall Be No Night" glorified the Finnish cause and saw only evil in the Russian, was that Russia was our probable ally and Finland an enemy. And we made too much of the democracy of a country, a government and a general who, if not formerly Nazi, were the natural allies of the Nazis. Remembering all this now, we can hope that Finland, which has suffered much, can achieve a better peace than Germany might expect. But the element of sentimentality and glorification must be absent in our present thoughts. When the opportunity came to join Germany in what then seemed an opportunity to crush Russia, the Finns were realistic. They made a mistake and lost a war. Now we must be willing to see Finland's destiny maintained on the plane of realism.

Hearts and Hershey Bars

To the pure of heart the ways of the world are often a severe trial. So much can be justified on grounds of "expediency" which cannot be justified on any other grounds, and so much is done on grounds of expediency which on any other grounds would be inexcusable, that he who tries to cling to other and higher principles often finds himself torn between the dictates of his conscience and the warnings of the "realists."

It is in that dilemma that we find ourselves when we contemplate the receptions now being tendered to the officers and crews of the French warships recently arrived in New York from Dakar and Casablanca. We are glad to do honor to these men who have so recently rejoined the fight against the Axis powers, and we are as ready as anyone to forgive them for having so recently fired on our own ships and men, for we know that they were only obeying orders received from above. We have found the sailors of these ships young, gay and willing to fight.

Yet we cannot avoid contrasting the public hullabaloo which is now being made about them with the tight-lipped silence and strict censorship which always accompanied the arrival of a Free French ship in an American port. We remember that when the submarine Surcouf and the destroyer Triomphant were here, not a word about them was allowed in any newspaper. Only last October, when sixty Fighting French naval officers visited New York, and Mayor LaGuardia planned an official reception at City Hall, the Navy Department held up its permission until half an hour after the reception was scheduled, with the result that it was never held.

Yet the Fighting French not only never fought against us but never once laid down their arms in the common struggle against the Axis. Whereas Admiral Fenard, who is now being made much of, was one of Darlan's closest associates during the Vichy days, and his aide, Commander Denis de Bourgoing, was Vichy's naval attaché at Washington and was interned at Hershey, Pa., when Vichy broke relations with us.

To the pure of heart the ways of the world are often a severe trial. Ex-Ambassador Gaston Henry-Haye sits in Hershey eating chocolate bars and waiting, confident, as well he may be, that his turn too will come. General de Gaulle sits in London, eating his heart out. And all his followers are sad, and some are growing cynical.

The ways of the world. . . .

Labor in Politics

Philip Murray made an important announcement the other day when he revealed that the AFL, the CIO, the Railroad Brotherhoods and the National Farmers' Union are planning to join in seeking to influence legislation in Washington. It is not new that labor should be concerned about pending legislation; but it is new—and important—for the three chief labor groups to be talking about coöperation with one another and with the most effective liberal organization of farmers in the country. Here is the beginning of something that may prove of vast importance.

For More Food

In order to ease our tight farm-credit situation, Secretary of Agriculture Claude Wickard has taken a wise step in releasing for use an old revolving fund of $50,000,000, which has been gathering cobwebs ever since it was appropriated to the Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation under Hoover back in 1932. These funds have now been made available to the Farm Production Administration to use as a weapon in its fight to increase our food production next year. The FPA will offer five-percent loans to farmers through their local war boards. If a crop produced under the loan is lost, the loan need not be repaid; livestock is not included in the plan. Last week the American Bankers' Association came to Washington to tell the Byrd Committee on Nonessential Expenditures how much it disapproved of this program. The ABA fears that this is only the beginning of a real government program of farm credit at low interest rates, and it is out to nip it in the bud. Many farmers wish that the ABA's fears were closer to the truth. They think five percent is too much interest, and they are sorry to see livestock, the bankers' favorite object for extortion, left out of the plan. They say that both these deficiencies result from the desire of the Department of Agriculture to avoid offending the bankers any more than it feels is absolutely necessary. Obviously Department concern for the bankers' feeling failed to prevent their opposition. We hope that Mr. Wickard will proceeed to cut down interest rates and will extend this good beginning of a farm-credit program to the scope and size necessary.

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A Penny's Worth of Justice

Tennessee, like many other states, has long been notorious for election irregularities; and the mountain county of McMinn has been particularly free and easy in this regard. The United States Department of Justice, which is charged with the duty of seeing that citizens' constitutional rights are not flouted, recently indicted three election officials who brazenly closed the polls in a certain district after they had been open only one hour and only a handful of votes had been cast. The Grand Jury supported this action; but the whole effort to uphold the sanctity of the elective process then broke down. Judge Leslie R. Darr of the United States District Court for Eastern Tennessee fined these three men one cent each plus a suspended sentence of a year's imprisonment. We should like to know how Judge Darr can justify such action, which makes a joke of the whole procedure, in a territory where electoral abuses are as grave as in Tennessee.

Good Luck!

Our friendly rival, The Nation, this week undergoes a change in its business basis. Miss Freda Kirchwey, the owner and editor, will henceforth be the editor only; ownership has been turned over to a non-profit membership corporation, Nation Associates, Inc. Like practically all liberal papers, including this one, The Nation does not make money; the new basis will facilitate appealing for the modest amount of outside support that is necessary, to a wider circle than heretofore. We hope and assume that the new basis of procedure will be successful; liberalism today needs every possible voice and especially one as effective as that of The Nation.

China in War and Peace

MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK'S speeches before Congress gave dramatic point and power to a cause which, had not the imagination of our people been jaded by the sequence of heroisms and tragedies in the war, should have needed no dramatizing. But we are what we are, and the vibrant appeal for aid made by the wife of China's leader—herself one of her country's most eloquent spokesmen—served to open afresh for the American people a subject that goes to the heart of our prejudices and moral genuineness, our war strategy and our peace perspectives.

There can be little denying that China has thus far been the poor relation at the United Nations table. She is far away, the difficulties of transport are enormous, and her people seem to American eyes so numerous and her human life so cheap that the sufferings she has endured have almost come to seem an inseparable part of the war scene in the Far East. Accordingly the aid that we have sent the Chinese has never amounted to more than the crumbs from our table. To say, as has been said, that we are now sending her more than the Lend-Lease supplies we sent when the Burma Road was still open is to play with words, since Lend-Lease had scarcely begun before the Burma Road was closed by Japanese conquest.

There have been other difficulties: the scarcity of trained Chinese aviators and technicians capable of handling the complicated machinery of modern warfare; the preference therefore of American military leaders to wait until they can send their own personnel across in addition to the equipment; the traditions of Chinese feudal corruption which levy tolls of personal bribery on every stage of the journey of aid to the ultimate battlefield; and, above all, the persistence of the smoldering factionalisms which have kept China from being a unified nation in the modern sense and which still keep the Kuomintang and the Chinese communist forces in a state of only formal truce and on the edge of civil conflict.

These things are not often spoken of openly, yet they must be candidly bared for an understanding of our relations with China. Even when they are added up their sum is slight when weighed in the balance of China's great needs and her deserts in the United Nations cause. Madame Chiang is right when she points out that for four and a half years the Chinese had to bear almost alone the sadistic fury of the Japanese war lords. For that fact ordinary Americans, who are now beginning to experience the meaning of war suffering, can only express their gratitude and their shame that they did not earlier seek to share the burden of the Chinese people. And it is true, in terms of need, that even at the moment Madame Chiang was speaking, the Japanese opened a seven-pronged new offensive against the Chinese armies, meant to scatter their defenses and demoralize their resistance. And it is true of even the sharpest words that Madame Chiang uttered—and there were some words with barbs—that they had behind them the slow and massive patience of the Chinese tradition.

More aid to China is therefore essential. How much more it is not within our own province to say: that can only be determined by the technical officials who know how much is urgently needed, how much is available, how much can—at the farthest stretch—be spared. But as our war production increases, it must be an increasing amount. And it must, at any calculation, be enough to keep our faith with the Chinese people, to prevent them from being demoralized and thrust out of the war, and to put to use the enormous potential that they represent in the war against the Japanese.

One thing needs, however, to be said. China's tragic position and our own deficiencies in the past in aiding her should not distort the perspective of our basic war strategy in the present phase of the war. Madame

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Chiang says that the Japanese are a powerful enemy, that they have vast resources within their present boundaries, and that every minute that we delay in hurling our full force against them means that they are better able to consolidate their strength. All that is profoundly true. Yet it is also true that we have, as United Nations, decided that our immediate and primary aim must be the destruction of Nazi power: and that the need of increasing the aid to the Chinese cannot deflect us from that decision.

This does not mean, as Madame Chiang seems to imply, that we regard the Japanese as a secondary enemy. It means simply that every strategy must have a time-table, and that in our time-table—which excludes the fighting of two major wars with equal strength—the war in the European theatre must take primacy. As soon as the Nazi fortress has been cracked, our full energies can then be diverted to the no less important task of cracking the Japanese power. To say that a purpose must come second in point of time does not mean that it is of less inherent importance. Nor does it exclude every genuine effort to increase aid within the framework of the basic strategy decided upon.

Nor does it exclude immediate action with respect to the post-war picture. Madame Chiang's words to Congress on the need for acting now to build the structure of an enduring peace were among the wisest words that have lately been spoken in Washington. "While we must not be visionary," she said, "we must have vision." And she warned against isolationism and against a narrow nationalism or even a continentalism.

Implied in her words there was also a warning against a narrow imperialism. There is nothing insoluble in the problem of our post-war relations with the Far East if we now recognize that its territories can no longer be regarded as backward areas for exploitation, nor its people as merely colonials. If, however, we persist in so regarding them, we shall only pile up difficulties for ourselves.

For the East has awakened. Our own doctrines, wedded to its age-old spiritual insight, have helped it to awaken. Our technology will eventually also help it to consolidate its potential strength and to make full use of its manpower. If we persist in regarding the Far East as an area for imperialist exploitation, we shall sooner or later come up against a military force which will drive Western imperialism out with a fury which will also wipe away the efforts at understanding that have so laboriously been built during this war. Madame Chiang was too polite to say these things. But we must nevertheless understand them. The revolutionary temper of our time is not only an Occidental fact, nor has it left the Eastern peoples untouched. Only if we act in terms of the principles of a United Nations structure that knows no differences of color or race shall we build well for the future.

Tribute to the Red Army

WHEN THE RED ARMY celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, on February 23, it was in the midst of the greatest winter campaign in the history of warfare. It had completely annihilated one German army, which lost more men in six months than Napoleon had when he invaded Russia. It had encircled another great army in the Caucasus. It had taken more booty than it could count or the Germans could afford to lose—for example, railway transportation is probably the weakest point in the German economy, and yet the Red Army captured 155 locomotives in a single city. In three months, it had advanced as much as 450 miles, along a front that originally extended from central Russia almost to the Caspian Sea. It had succeeded in liberating perhaps 150,000 square miles of Russian territory.

But this is not the full measure of its achievements. In terms of war economy, it had won vast underground stores of raw materials—including the best of Russia's coal mines, which are also the best in Europe; much of her iron ore, salt, soda, mercury; and the only oil wells that the Germans had succeeded in taking. The Red Army has also won the rich wheat fields of the Kuban and the Don. It is winning back the whole Donets Basin, which is the Ruhr, the Midlands and the Upper Ohio Valley of Russia. At the same time, it has reëstablished the Russian lines of communication. Trains are already running through the ruins of Rostov, bound for Baku and Armenia. When the ice goes out, the Volga will be open for 2,200 miles, from Rzhev to the Caspian Sea.

The Red Army is fighting today in the most highly urbanized section of Eastern Europe. Among the big cities it has already freed are Stalingrad (with 445,000 people before the war), Voronezh (327,000), Rostov (520,700), Voroshilovgrad (213,000) and Kharkov (833,432)—these in addition to Krasnodar, with its flour mills, and Kursk, with its iron ore. Among the cities that seem likely to fall within the next few weeks are Stalino (462,000), Mariupol (222,000), Dnepropetrovsk (500,662) and Zaporozhe (289,000). If the Russians reach the line of the Dnieper, as they now show signs of doing, the only important cities left in German hands will be Kiev and Odessa. The only important raw materials will be the iron ore and manganese of Krivoy Rog. Russia will be restored as an economic empire, just at the moment when German economy is declining.

Will the Red Army go still farther and win still greater victories before the present campaign is ended? That seems doubtful at the present moment. It is true that by taking Zaporozhe, where the last railroad crosses the lower Dnieper, it could force the Germans to retreat from the Crimea. It might even encircle

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the German army now retreating from Rostov, but the chances are still against its winning this new battle of annihilation. The Rostov army has escaped one trap already, and it can probably fight hard enough and move fast enough to escape another. As for a summer advance west of the Dnieper, that depends largely on whether the English and the Americans invade the Continent. A second front is no longer needed to save Russia, since the Red Army has done that job without help from the West—as Stalin said bitterly—but it is needed more than ever to save Europe from utter ruin and to save ourselves from two additional years of bloodshed.

The New WPB

DONALD NELSON needs all the public support he can get to make his most recent reorganization move in the WPB stick. We believe Nelson was right in firing Ferdinand Eberstadt from the number-two position at the WPB and promoting Charles E. Wilson, former General Electric president, to that job. Both Eberstadt and Wilson are tough, capable administrators, though with different backgrounds. Eberstadt is a Wall Street investment banker; Wilson is a production engineer. In announcing Wilson's new appointment, Nelson made it clear that from here on the WPB job is one of production, and that Wilson's engineering training and experience therefore made him a suitable choice for right-hand man.

But the reasons for this personnel shift go much deeper. It must be remembered that Eberstadt has got in many a good lick in the battle for production since he came to the WPB from the Army-Navy Munitions Board several months ago. He worked out the celebrated Controlled-Materials Plan, the first plan devised which offered any real possibility of controlling the flow of raw materials. That accomplishment should not be underestimated. But from the time he arrived at the WPB, it was clear that Eberstadt stood with those who insisted that the role of a civilian agency in war production ended with the allocation of raw materials, that from there on the job of turning out guns, ships and tanks in the proper numbers at the proper time was the responsibility of the War and Navy Departments.

This was the point of view of Undersecretaries for War and Navy Patterson and Forrestal, who were instrumental in putting Eberstadt into the WPB to argue this position for them there. Their plan represented the way Bernard Baruch ran things in World War I. Charlie Wilson does not think that that old-fashioned approach will work in this kind of high-speed war. He stands for over-all scheduling of every phase of production from raw materials to the end product, including civilian supervision of production and some say-so about end products and the time schedule for their production.

This difference of opinion meant that Wilson and Eberstadt must clash. They did—and with vigor—almost from their first encounter. Then things came to a head. Eberstadt's boys got to the point where they were so busy trying to knife Wilson, leaking rumors to the press and trying to get into the White House with their grievances that they had little time left for looking to production matters. At the same time Donald Nelson saw a small storm gathering on the horizon with his name on it, and understood that now was the time for him to get tough or it would soon be too late. He acted and Eberstadt went out.

It is impossible to predict how this latest and by far most significant move of Nelson's will work out. Certainly Charles E. Wilson is the first really strong executive with a conviction in favor of civilian control of production who has appeared on the Washington wartime scene. He has shown results in those few branches of production where he had been given power prior to last week. He broke many an aircraft bottleneck simply by knowing the production tricks that would break it and insisting that they be tried. But we should not forget that Wilson is inheriting all the weak industry branches, the dollar-a-year psychology and the incompetence down below the top layer of the WPB, which have been holding us back so long. He will have to face the antagonism of military men who have been openly critical of his appointment. Patterson and Forrestal fought with Nelson about it; if they would now resign, Wilson would have a much fairer chance to show what he could do. If we are to believe the persistent rumors in the daily press, Nelson and Wilson are both in for attack from powerful White House advisers. Whatever is to happen in this direction, we hope that the President will give Nelson a chance to show what can be done with the WPB under new management.

THE NEW REPUBLIC
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Farmers, Labor and Prices

THE WAR AGAINST INFLATION has been marked by a slow retreat that may at any moment turn into a precipitate rout. The three major enemies in this conflict have been identified as, first, the failure of the government to take enough money away from the citizens to close the inflationary gap; second, the pressure of the farm bloc for higher prices of crops; third, the pressure of labor for higher wages. The first member of this inflation axis has been the subject of previous articles on fiscal policy and taxation. I now propose to analyze the second and third. A good deal of heat has been generated in discussion of them; at times the country seems to be divided between those who hate labor and those who hate the farmers. But the present conflict requires understanding as well as anger; it is not an isolated phenomenon, but has a history and a future. What can we learn about it that may be useful for action now and in the post-war period?

The History of Farm Parity. – Most farmers, and some others as well, remember vividly the experience of the former war and its sequel. Under pressure of heavy demand, food prices soared. The Food Administration, which allowed price increases of farm staples in the interest of greater production, was under fire from a farm bloc to set still higher ones. I saw Herbert Hoover get a cruel going-over from a Senate committee acting for the sugar interests. The wheat-growers were particularly outraged by the prices established. Nevertheless, the prices paid were high enough, plus the patriotic appeal for more production, to stimulate an immense increase in acreage.

After the Armistice, war controls were quickly demobilized and real inflation set in. For two years the farmers thought they were in clover, selling large crops at higher prices than they had ever before received. They saw no reason why this should not go on indefinitely. Then came the crash, marked by a sharp falling off of foreign demand, as trade routes were reopened and the warring nations got back into crop production. Prices fell quickly and unsold surpluses piled up.

From the depression of 1921 industry soon recovered, and by 1923 was beginning to boom, going on steadily to new highs, with minor interruptions, until the climax of 1929. But the farmers, by and large, never came back. If one judges their rewards by the prices paid for their products, they had a long struggle even to regain the relative position they had held before the war began. Then came a new depression and a new collapse. The New Deal tried to help them, but with only moderate success. Not until the past year or two have farmers begun to taste anything like the prosperity they briefly enjoyed nearly a quarter-century ago.

Price parity is not only the formula which has been customarily used to depict the fortunes of the farmers, but the political symbol of a long agrarian struggle. Farmers learned that their welfare is dependent, not only on the prices they receive, but on the prices they have to pay. The ratio between the two is what counts. "Parity" is that ratio as it existed before the First World War. It is the mark which the farm movement long ago set out to achieve—not as a measure of final justice and complete felicity, but at least as something which had existed and seemed reasonable, and something that for years appeared to be beyond their reach.

If we take as 100 the ratio of prices received by farmers to prices paid by them in 1913, we find that the peak of farm prosperity came in 1917, at a price ratio of 118. For two more years the ratio was above parity, though somewhat lower, because other prices were catching up to farm prices. In 1920, when farm prices were still more than double the pre-war level, the ratio sank just below parity, to 99, because of the effect of inflation on industry. Then came the precipitous drop of the ratio to 75 in 1921 and 81 in 1922. The drop was all the more disastrous because actual crop prices fell much more than the ratio—from 205 to 116 in one year—while land values and mortgage debt had been fixed at the inflated war level, and of course did not readily decline.

Though during the subsequent years of "prosperity" the farmers' economic position as measured by relative prices improved somewhat, the ratio never got closer to parity than in 1925, when it had regained slightly more than half the loss after 1913, though not approaching the level of 1917. It ended the period in 1929 at 89. During the new depression and the slow recovery from it, much the same story as in the previous decade was repeated. The Second World War brought the ratio up to 96 in August, 1941, 97 in March, 1942, 107 in August, 1942, and now to 115.

It must be noted that during this whole period there was a variation in the fortunes of crops, some doing better than others. Last August, for instance, truck crops were far above parity, followed at some distance by meat animals and miscellaneous crops. Chickens and eggs were just above, while dairy products and cotton were just below. Fruits and grains were still some distance from the goal.

If one looks only at these figures, it is a little difficult to become outraged at the present demands for higher farm prices, however necessary it may be in the general interest to keep prices down. The effort to redefine parity to include farm labor costs is particularly persuasive, in view of the shortage caused by selective service and industrial employment.

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Labor and the Cost of Living. – Just as farmers have come to measure their status by the parity-price ratio, so labor has long watched the relation between wages and the cost of living. The two kinds of measure are substantially similar: the ratio between what the industrial wage-earner receives per hour or per standard week and what it costs him to buy the articles in a standard family budget is much like the ratio between what the farmer receives per bushel of wheat or per pound of cotton and the prices of the things he buys. Labor insists that wages should rise at least as much as the cost of living, and, when conditions are favorable for such a development, ought to rise more.

Labor, however, has long since ceased to look back to the ratio between wages and the cost of living existing before the former war, for the simple reason that for many years wage rates have been above this "parity." It is true that during that war, and especially during the inflation immediately following it, labor had a hard time to keep up with the cost of living, so that in 1919 it was in fact somewhat below its pre-war position. But ever since then, there has been a tendency of "real wages" to rise. Weekly union wage rates rose, in terms of their purchasing power, 3.7 percent a year on the average between 1922 and 1929, or something like 25 percent for the period. Hourly earnings of all factory labor increased less than this, but still gained more than 10 percent in purchasing power. Another marked rise occurred during the New Deal, and still another in the recovery at the beginning of the defense program.

It is a striking fact that labor's fortunes in this respect were just the opposite of the farmers'. While the farmers were gaining during the last war, labor was losing. While the farmers were struggling for a return to their parity after it, labor was rising farther and farther above its "parity." Thus has arisen the generalization that for the short run, at least, farmers gain by rising prices, while labor gains when prices are stable or fall.

This generalization is easy to understand when we remember that wages—and the industrial costs which depend on or are allied with them—are far slower to respond to changes in economic activity than are commodity prices. When prices fall, wages have a tendency to lag behind, as they do when prices rise. And the prices of crops usually rise and fall faster than the prices of manufactured products. But it is a tricky and unsound generalization with which to judge the long-term welfare of workers, or of farmers either. For, as labor spokesmen will be quick to point out, it overlooks two important factors—the volume of employment, and the amount of product that can be turned out by a unit of labor, just as it overlooks the amount a farmer can raise and the amount he can sell at the price prevailing.

When the cost of living falls, the purchasing power of an hourly wage may rise, but labor at the same time may be worse off because there are so many unemployed that there are fewer hours worked. Furthermore, when one looks at the steady and great increase in the amount of product turned out per man-hour of labor, the long-term gain in the purchasing power of wages appears more than justified. It may be added that when employment is large, labor may gain in spite of a failure of wage rates to keep up with the cost of living, because there are so many more hours of work performed.

Yet it is necessary to sympathize with the wage-earners' insistence, in view of many years of unemployment, that when at last they are offered a full opportunity to work they shall not be deprived of any part of their gains by a failure of wages to rise as fast as the cost of what they have to buy.

How, then, can we reconcile two apparently justified demands which conflict with each other? How can we grant the farmer parity or more, and at the same time grant industrial labor increases in wages to match the rising cost of food? The answer is that we can't. For every time food prices go up to satisfy the farmer, wages will have to go up, and that will cause an increase in the prices of what the farmer has to buy. Then the whole process must be repeated, and neither party to the arrangement will gain.

The real trouble is with the formulas themselves. We shall have to find better ones, which *can* be reconciled. And we have seen that neither is a real measure of the welfare of farmers or labor, since both are concerned merely with prices, and not with incomes. The income of the farmer is measured not merely by the price he receives but by the amount he sells multiplied by the price. And the income of the industrial worker is measured not by his wage rate per hour or per week, but by that amount multiplied by the number of hours or weeks he works.

Both Farmers and Workers Have Gained. – We have seen that farm prices, on the average, are now above parity—some very far above, some still below. But in addition, farmers have raised and sold more than ever, so that the effect on their incomes is redoubled. Production of food in 1942 was 10 percent greater than in 1941, and 25 percent greater than the average for 1935-39. Total farm income in 1942 was about $16,000,000,000, larger than in any previous year, even the boom year of 1919. And there were fewer farmers to share it, the number of men engaged in agriculture having fallen about 10 percent since 1919. As for manufacturing labor, while normal wage rates rose about the same amount as the cost of living between January, 1941, and May, 1942, or 15 percent, the wage-earners' income gained far more than this, because of overtime rates and extra hours worked. Average weekly earnings increased 35 percent in this

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period. Enlarged employment helped many wage-earning families in addition, because more members of the family had jobs. Total manufacturing payrolls rose 60 percent in these months. The cost of living has risen since then, but less steeply than before, as more foods have come under control. About 90 percent of food prices are now under ceilings. Wage rates have risen also.

The truth is that both farmers and wage-earners are now enjoying larger cash incomes than ever before in the history of this country, and could, at the present level of prices, establish a higher standard of living than ever before—if the goods were available for purchase. (There are of course exceptions in both groups, who are entitled to demand more than they have. We are here speaking merely of averages and totals.) And the truth is also that both are going to have, in the coming year, more money than they can spend for the goods which will be on the market, unless the prices of these goods rise considerably. The effort to get higher money wages or higher prices for farm products is therefore entirely beside the point, as far as bettering the level of living of either group is concerned, as long as the war lasts.

The living quarters of wage-earners are going to depend, not on the money in their pockets, but on the houses and apartments that can be found or built where they work. Farmers cannot build new houses or make additions during the war. Neither can they buy new automobiles, or any gas or tires not allowed them by the rationing board. Consumers' durable goods of many kinds are out for the duration. Wage-earners can buy no more food than their ration coupons will allow or than can be found in the shops. Fortunately, they cannot this time be made the butt of jokes for wearing silk shirts; their wives cannot even buy silk stockings—or many rayon ones, for that matter. Three pairs of shoes a year is the limit. It is almost literally true that if the rise in *both* food prices and wages were stopped completely at this point, the number of wage-earners or farmers who would suffer the deprivation of a single article which they could otherwise buy would be so small as to be negligible.

Of course there are exceptions at the lower end of the scale in both country and city, but in these cases the remedy is different altogether. If they are farmers, they are living on poor land or are using poor methods, or are raising the wrong crops, or they have no land at all. The remedies are far more fundamental than higher prices—either to get off the land into industry, or to practise an improved agriculture, or to bring about a change in land tenure. If they are wage-earners, the cure *may* be higher wages for the jobs they are doing, but it is far more likely to be a shift into an industry which is suffering from labor shortages, or greater use by the government war program of the plant in which they are working.

The standard of living of both groups can be somewhat improved during the war—but not by giving them more money. Better housing and sanitation in munitions centers, better organized medical care, greater knowledge of the science of nutrition, more vegetable gardens in the backyard and the vacant lot and on the one-crop farm, provisions to provide farmers who need them with adequate harvest hands, machinery, fertilizer and transportation—such things as these, which merely imply planning and use of the limited supplies available—offer the only large possibility of higher standards.

No substantial injustice would be done to either party, then, if prices and wages were kept exactly where they are for the duration, while every feasible effort is made to sustain real access to the necessities of work and life. On the other hand, any attempt to achieve more exact justice by jacking up the money rewards of one or the other would have no logical end, would benefit neither as a whole and would be perilous for the entire economy.

What About the Future?—It is probable that both labor and farmer organizations are motivated, not merely by the immediate situation, but by a struggle for status in the long term. Must the see-saw be resumed after the war?

If our present experience has proved anything, it has proved that on one condition both labor and farmers can benefit simultaneously. That condition is full employment and increasing productivity. Suppose that after fighting stops, as well as during it, no change whatever takes place in either farm prices or wage rates. But suppose our productive capacity is turned back to supplying civilian needs, without any collapse in employment. Rationing restrictions would gradually be relaxed. Wage-earners would buy more farm products; farmers would buy more industrial products. The real incomes of both would grow, not by virtue of price changes, but by virtue of volume changes in consumption.

After complete transition to civilian economy had taken place, the advance in living standards could continue as rapidly as we learned how to produce more and better goods per man-hour both in industry and in agriculture. That is just what we have done in the past, and both farmers and wage-earners have been benefited by it. Higher productivity means lower unit costs, which can be translated either into lower prices, benefiting farmers and workers as consumers, or into higher money increases without any increase in prices. The one thing that has been lacking for enjoyment of its fruits has been full employment. When full employment finally came, it was accompanied by the necessity to devote much of the product to military uses.

We also should adopt new and better measures for

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welfare, new symbols for the struggle of farmers and workers. Instead of *price* parity for farmers, let us hereafter speak of *real-income* parity. And in industry, instead of comparing *wage rates* with the cost of living, let us compare *annual incomes* with the cost of living. That would take into account, for farmers, the volume of crops produced and sold, and for wage-earners, the volume and steadiness of employment. It would help concentration on policies of benefit to all, and would break through the donkey-carrot fixation which is now deceiving both farmers and labor.

GEORGE SOULE

Salute to the Court

WITH THE THOUGHT that if a cat can look at at a king a layman perhaps may look at the law, I timorously submit the following as a short and curious chapter in the history of the Supreme Court of the United States:

On the most recent opinion day of our highest tribunal, February 15, I read, as is my custom, the telegraphic press-service reports of the judgments and entries of the supreme jurists. In the Associated Press account, as printed in The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, I read that the court had agreed to hear rearguements in its much-criticized 5-to-4 Jehovah's Witnesses pamphlets decision, handed down last June 8. Then in the International News Service report, presented in The St. Louis Star-Times, I read that the court had "vacated" the earlier judgment and would now reconsider it.

This word "vacated" seemed very strange. I could remember no time when the Supreme Court had previously "vacated" a duly recorded decision without first either formally reconsidering the old case or reviewing the same issue in a new case. This was not a reversal as yet, but apparently a peculiar act of wiping a decision from the records, temporarily at least, ahead of reversal. So I asked the Asociated Press manager in St. Louis to inquire of his bureau in Washington how it was that the INS happened to use the word "vacated" and why the AP had not done so.

The next morning, the AP's A.M. report, printed in The St. Louis Globe-Democrat, used the word "vacated," and when I arrived at the Post-Dispatch office I found the Washington AP's answer to my query. The judgments had been "vacated," reported the AP, and it put quotation marks around the unusual verb.

Now this made it really worth looking into. The Opelika decision—so-called after the town in Alabama which was the first of a group of three municipalities to apply peddler's licensing requirements to the distribution of religious leaflets by the Jehovah's Witnesses—had been condemned in the press almost without exception as a violation of constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion, of speech and of the press. If that decision had been removed by a "vacating" order, a fuller statement of the facts was in order.

So I put in a telephone call to Washington for an outstanding authority on the work and history of the Supreme Court. He promptly verified that the word "vacated" had been used in the official record. In answer to my question as to whether any established decision had previously been "vacated" in this almost casual fashion, he said that he did not recall such an instance. Asked the effect of the "vacating" order, he said it was to suspend the decision written into the Supreme Court reports last June, that things had now "been put back where they were" prior to that time.

Then this *was* something different in the way of Supreme Court procedure. Inasmuch as my authority was wholly reliable, I proceeded to write an article for The Post-Dispatch in which I set forth the unusual facts against the background of the several Jehovah's Witnesses cases. The first sentence described the "vacating" order as "an extraordinary and perhaps unprecedented thing."

That was on Tuesday. From the beginning I had been curious to know precisely how the word "vacated" had been used in the record, and so on Wednesday I telegraphed Charles Elmore Cropley, the clerk of the Supreme Court, for this information. Late in the afternoon came this surprising, not to say astonishing, reply: "Court has deleted the words quote judgments vacated end quote from its official order granting rehearings in Opelika and companion cases."

There was no explanation for the deletion any more than there was an explanation for the strange order in the first place. The hotly disputed decision was back in force once more and the ordinances of Opelika, Alabama, Fort Smith, Arkansas, and Casa Grande, Arizona, for the time being at least, still applied to the distribution of religious tracts by the Jehovah's Witnesses.

As Thomas Reed Powell intoned solemnly to us one day in Langdell Hall at Harvard after a 1939 decision had invalidated a considerable portion of his course in constitutional law: "The court giveth and the court taketh away; blessed be the name of the court."

Such is the situation at the moment of writing. The prospect is for further change in the near future. The Opelika decision rehearing has been set for March 9, while arguments were heard February 12 on similar cases from Dallas and Paris, Texas. Moreover, on March 10 or thereabouts, the court will hear the West Virginia case which revives the flag-salute issue, also

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arising from the Jehovah's Witnesses, who interpret a salute to the flag as a violation of the commandment against bowing down before a "graven image."

This West Virginia case brings up for review Mr. Justice Frankfurter's opinion in 1940 which upheld the Minersville, Pennsylvania, School Board in expelling the children of Walter Gobitis for refusing to salute the flag. This was the 8-to-1 decision which found only Mr. Justice Stone, not then elevated to the chief justiceship, in dissent. But what a dissent it was:

> The Constitution [he said] expresses more than the conviction of the people that democratic processes must be preserved at all costs. It also expresses a faith and a command that freedom of mind and spirit must be preserved, a freedom which government must obey if it is to adhere to that justice and moderation without which no free government can persist.

The most surprising thing of all about the Gobitis decision was that it revealed the Supreme Court, after five New Deal appointments, as seemingly less solicitous of freedom of religion than the Bill of Rights Committee of the American Bar Association. For this committee made the case its first important work and submitted a memorable brief against the compulsory-salute decision as an invasion of religious liberty.

The protests of Mr. Justice Stone, the bar committee and liberal editors were not wasted. Two years later, when the Opelika decision was handed down, Messrs. Justices Black, Douglas and Murphy, after joining with the new Chief Justice, in a historic and unprecedented joint statement, cleared their individual consciences. They said:

> This is but another step in the direction which Minersville School District v. Gobitis took against the same religious minority and is a logical extension of the principles upon which that decision rested. Since we joined in the opinion in the Gobitis case, we think this is an appropriate occasion to state that we now believe that it was also wrongly decided.

This wholesale change of heart, which transformed the overwhelming majority of 8-to-1 into the narrowest possible majority of 5-to-4, was promptly noted in the lower courts, both federal and state. Indeed, it became in large part the basis on which Federal Circuit Court Judge John J. Parker, speaking for a three-judge federal court in a West Virginia case, refused last October to accept the Gobitis ruling as a binding precedent. The North Carolina judge, rejected as a reactionary by the Senate for the Supreme Court in the Hoover administration, said:

> As fine a ceremony as the flag salute is, it can have only an indirect influence on the national safety; and no clear and present danger will result to anyone if the children of this sect are allowed to refrain from saluting because of their conscientious scruples, however groundless we may personally think these scruples to be.

As was well said by Judge Lehman of New York: "The salute of the flag is a gesture of love and respect—fine when there is real love and respect back of the gesture. The flag is dishonored by a salute by a child in reluctant and terrified obedience to a command of secular authority which clashes with the dictates of conscience."

This court will not countenance such tyranny but will use the power at its command to see that rights guaranteed by the fundamental law are respected.

Add the new member, Mr. Justice Wiley B. Rutledge Jr., to the minority of last June and there is a new majority of at least five to discard the Gobitis and Opelika decisions. And we have a right to add Mr. Justice Rutledge to the Stone-Black-Douglas-Murphy side, since he took a stand against infringement of the religious freedom of the Jehovah's Witnesses when he was a judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. He fills the Byrnes vacancy and reduces the 1942 majority to a minority of four.

But the irony of it all is that Congress has taken a hand in this situation, and in such a way to as leave the forthcoming flag-salute decision pretty much for the court's own record. Section 7 of Public Law No. 623, finally passed last December 15, reads:

> That the pledge of allegiance to the flag . . . be rendered by standing with the right hand over the heart; extending the hand, palm upward, toward the flag at the words "to the flag" and holding this position until the end, when the hand drops to the side. However, civilians will always show full respect to the flag when the pledge is given by merely standing at attention, men removing the headdress. Persons in uniform shall render the military salute.

Already this eminently sensible declaration of national policy has eliminated flag-salute controversies in many school districts over the county. Let us put it this way: Congress has done some judgment "vacating" on its own hook and has done it well.

St. Louis IRVING DILLIARD

My Mother

Suburban middle class and stoutening middle age,
your early poverty
you drop deliberately
as voided bill.

View is pleasant: garden, daughters married,
son with college degree,
grandchildren twining like ivy
round the house.

Sunday dinner gowned in golden butter.
Thank God for family health,
and could solve the world's ills
with second portion.
Would hide the word *death* with your wide lap,
tuck tears into bed.
Unread,
your hands are scholarly with love.

EVE MERRIAM

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The Catholic Issue

AMERICANS have been dodging and postponing a distasteful chore: a reëxamination of their attitude toward the Catholic Church. Or rather that reëxamination is already being made by some millions of us and we have discussed it among ourselves. But we are loath to discuss it in public. The time has come when that must be done. And it is of the utmost importance that it be done with understanding and good will.

Persons of even early middle age remember when the Catholic Church was a sort of pet of civilized intelligent Americans, of that potentially dominant but politically unorganized group who are Protestants or who no longer have any institutional religion of their own but who nevertheless feel themselves among the heirs of the Christian tradition. Probably there was a touch of patronage in our attitude toward a group that consisted largely of the Irish and that was wholly dominated by them. The Catholics were a minority just emerging from ridicule and even persecution. The Pat-and-Mike joke and the Harlem goat had only recently disappeared from the humorous weeklies, and although we had smiled at the pompous solemnity of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in its campaign against these slanders, we sympathized too. We associated anti-Catholic prejudice with the most ignorant elements in our non-Catholic population and we had the same horror of it that we felt for anti-Semitism.

And there was a more respectful element in our friendliness. This was our nostalgia for old forms and rituals in an age when they had long since ceased to stand for the heresy-hunting, church-ridden state and had come to have an almost purely esthetic connotation. We assumed that the future belonged securely to that scientific humanism animated by Christian ideals that had become the best end-product of Protestantism, and that we could afford to be not only generous but even to make a sort of fashionable hobby of the cultivation of vague spiritual-esthetic accords. Our middle class was swarming over Europe by the hundreds of thousands and even the millions, feeling the spell of the mellowed stone and the stained glass and the frescoes, and its members were forever making the delighted discovery that even here at home, and among the Irish, the priesthood included men of rare cultivation and charm and spiritual power.

There was a third factor in Catholic popularity. This was our resentment of fundamentalist Protestantism, which stood in the twenties for obscurantism and political interference as the Catholics stand today. It had imposed prohibition on the country and had given us the Scopes monkey trial. The Catholics had avoided these vulgar errors and we were grateful.

So much for cultural factors. Politically there was the historic association between the Catholic population of our great cities and the Democratic Party, so that ever since that party succeeded the insurgent Western Republican Party as an instrument of progress, the Catholic Tammany machines have been one of the vote-getting reliances of our "new freedoms" and "new deals." Nor was the relation by any means historic and fortuitous merely. Catholic leaders like Mgr. John A. Ryan and the late Frank P. Walsh gave it reality and do today.

The high tide of this accord between our liberal humanists and our Catholics was dramatized by an incident of the 1928 presidential campaign. This was the presentation to Governor Smith at his headquarters at the Biltmore Hotel of a strikingly eloquent testimonial of esteem and support by an inpressive delegation of intellectuals headed by Professor John Dewey. Outraged by the intolerance shown four years earlier at the Madison Square Garden convention and grateful to Al Smith for his record at Albany, non-Catholic liberals rose to his support with a particular fervor.

This accord was a valuable asset for American democracy and American culture. And it is with sadness that one today wonders how many of that delegation of 1928 would be willing once again to pledge their support to any candidate for President who accepted, as humbly as Al Smith apparently did, the authority of the Catholic hierarchy.

If the Smith-Hoover campaign marked the high tide of liberal friendliness toward the Church, it also marked a radical change in Catholic feeling and Catholic policy. During the campaign Clarence Darrow came to New York from Chicago for a series of meetings, and I accompanied him one evening to Newark, where he addressed a huge crowd in which the clerical collar was conspicuous. Darrow had them with him from the first and he let himself go with a boyish glee as he lashed the intolerance of hill-billy Protestantism. You could sense in that crowd something more than campaign enthusiasm. There was deep resentment and bitter hurt and a fierce clan loyalty. And Al Smith's defeat, in which anti-Catholic bigotry played an important part, ended an era. It left the Catholics disillusioned and embittered and it ended their policy of appeasement and conciliation. There began instead a policy of organized assertion and aggression, based on realization of what a powerful organized minority could accomplish as demonstrated by the Anti-Saloon League and the American Legion. The Catholic pattern already existed. For two or three generations, the more intransigent Catholic priests and the politicians had used the blind loyalty of their following, locally

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and in limited ways, to assert themselves in city halls and newspaper offices in those cities where they were numerically strong. They had helped to wreck John Purroy Mitchel's career when this Catholic Mayor of New York refused to interfere with enforcement of sanitary and safety laws against a Catholic orphanage. In cities where Irish and Italian populations were large, they had used the threat of boycott, and occasionally the boycott itself, to censor the newspapers by barring from publication any reporting of incidents discreditable to the Church or even to any one of its priests.

After 1928 these techniques came to be applied more and more on a national scale, to influence public officials and newspapers in every field from the production of plays and pictures to foreign affairs. The new policy has been vastly successful, until today it sometimes seems to alarmed Americans that the first concern of our local and national governments is the appeasement of Catholic opinion. And Catholic opinion has come to mean not the opinion personified by Al Smith of the Albany days, or by Frank P. Walsh or Bishop Lucey or Monsignor Ryan, but the opinion of the most arrogant and bigoted section of the Church. For it is probably a sound generalization that when a group changes its tactics from conciliation to aggression, power within the group passes from those who are reasonable and generous to those who are none of these things.

Annoying and disturbing enough are the successful Catholic attempts to censor plays and pictures and to use the power of the state to thwart the campaign of doctors and social workers against irresponsible parenthood as a source of poverty, disease and crime. But this sort of thing was familiar and the Catholics were merely following Protestant precedent. What first aroused and alarmed us was the part played by Catholics in perverting our foreign policy after the outbreak of the Nazi-Fascist-inspired revolt against the government of Spain. Although Catholic spokesmen, such as Father Gillis of The Catholic World and the editors of The Commonweal, honestly faced and affirmed the failures and sins of the Spanish Church and its large responsibility for the horrors of the war, their voices were drowned out or silenced as the hierarchy and priesthood closed their ranks in highly emotional partisanship. This was understandable enough. What was unforgivable was their concerted campaign to replace international law and this nation's traditional loyalty to democratic principles with Catholic prejudice and self-interest as the mainsprings of our government's foreign policy. There is no question that Catholic influence in the State Department and at the White House was a powerful and even a decisive factor in the shameful course followed by this great democracy as it violated the rights of the Spanish Republic under international law and forbade the shipment of munitions to the Loyalist armies. Even more serious, because it prevented any exposure and agitation to prevent this betrayal, was the campaign of Catholics to suppress discussion of the Spanish issue by the press. Newspapers that published editorials favorable to the Spanish government were threatened with boycott, and only a few of the most courageous and independent ones refused to yield. Even news reports of the visits and utterances of Loyalist Spaniards were censored by the same means. And this in spite of the fact that a Gallup poll showed that an overwhelming majority of the American people sympathized with the Loyalist cause. Altogether it was the most serious and sinister blow to the functioning of our democracy that has occurred in our time.

The result is an acute state of alarm on the part of liberal non-Catholics. And undoubtedly, if the truth were known, this alarm is shared by many Catholics who have not forgotten that this remains as always an overwhelmingly non-Catholic country, and who have a deep concern both for the continued prestige of their church and for the humane values that their fellow Catholics are threatening.

The power and the menace of reactionary Catholic influence is vastly increased by another portentous result of the change in tactics since 1928. As Catholic leadership shifts to the right, with fear of communism as an important causative factor, it approaches affinity and alliance with the reactionary business community that heretofore has maintained a historic affiliation with Protestantism. And today the threat looms of a conscious coalition between business para-fascism and reactionary clericalism, joining hands in their fear of democracy and socialism. It is no accident that charlatans of the Huey Long and Klan persuasion, once violently anti-Catholic, have joined hands with Father Coughlin and his agents.

If this tendency, which is still only a tendency in America, should reach fulfilment, it would rob us of a powerful and promising ally in the fight for humane values and at the same time enormously strengthen the already menacing forces of economic and political and cultural reaction. And the fear abides that it has come dangerously near to fulfilment already.

What can we do about it?

The first thing to do is to get the whole subject out in the open and to encourage the fullest discussion, and to insist that this discussion be carried on with the utmost good will.

The next thing is to discover and celebrate all the fine, humane, progressive groups and leaders and tendencies within the Church and to preserve or recover our fellowship with them. The hearts of thousands of us leaped up when we read Father Ryan's courageous formal address at a national meeting of Catholics at Cleveland in the last week of 1942, in which he denounced the fraudulence of the National Associa-

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tion of Manufacturers' conception of "free enterprise" and warned of disaster ahead if we permit policy to be controlled by our economically illiterate business men. There is, of course, a danger that Father Ryan's social and economic program will be twisted into too close conformity with Italian ideas of the "corporative state." And it is true that this noble old man's loyalty to the Church as an institution and his dislike of Russian communism kept him silent on the Spanish issue. But for all that he has the flaming spirit of the true American democrat. And he has been for a quarter of a century the highest formal economic authority of the Church in America. And there are thousands of others, several in high places.

Now we come to the third and most important, as it is the most onerous and distasteful, chore. That is to organize an open, fighting, opposition to reactionary Catholic pressure on office-holders, the press, the stage, the movies, to organized Catholic attempts to use a fanatically loyal and largely ignorant following to boycott and blackmail and coerce.

Liberal Americans are checked in such an enterprise by a deep inhibition. It seems to them preposterous and outrageous that we must again organize against any religious group and fight once more the battle against religious bigotry's usurping or perverting the power of the state. It is as preposterous as that other revival of old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago by the Southern reactionaries as they threaten another civil war, if only in the political field, over the human and civil rights of the Negro. But there it is and it must be faced.

Today we begin to realize that little as we liked the fundamentalist Protestants, they did at least maintain a balance of power that curtailed Catholic interference and aggression. That counter-force was all but wiped out when the fundamentalist sects discredited themselves by putting all their eggs in the Anti-Saloon League basket. It left the intolerant and aggressive faction of Catholics as the one powerful organized religious pressure group in public affairs and they have made the most of their opportunity.

This is a highly anomalous situation, because the Catholics are not only a minority in our total population but a much smaller minority of the literate and articulate and potentially influential. And the time has come for the majority to assert itself against those who would take advantage of our tolerance and generosity.

Once we had in this country a semi-secret organization called the American Protective Association, anathematized by Catholics and liberal Protestants alike as the APA. It is significant of the shift in forces that the APA was largely a conservative business group that associated Catholics with the unruly proletariat and such manifestations of Irish working-class revolt as the Molly Maguires. Today opposition to Catholic political pressure would enlist a diametrically opposite element. It should be led by men who understand and acknowledge the values in Catholicism and who are ready and eager to coöperate with the large and potentially predominant number of Catholics who think and feel as democrats. But it must be ready to take on in rough-and-tumble political combat those Catholics who attempt to coerce newspapers and producers of plays and pictures and public officials. Its first and most effectual weapon would be just the facing of the problem and its frank discussion. And this would mean first of all the digging up of the facts and their reporting by editors and writers freed of inhibition because assured that they would not be misunderstood as agents of religious prejudice. We don't know until this day, for instance, at least I have not been able to learn, just how and through whom Catholic influence was brought to bear on Mr. Roosevelt and the State Department during the Spanish War, nor how and through whom it is being exerted today to influence our attitude toward Franco and our policy in North Africa. We need the answers to these questions before we can face the lurking and dreaded danger that the whole peace will be compromised by sinister influence in the future.

We need some scholarly spadework on the history of the Catholics in the United States and an analysis of the trends of Catholic thought. I have always assumed that the Church is endlessly adaptable and that those are wrong who say that its heritage of authoritarian doctrine and habit precludes the possibility of any sincere and wholehearted commitment to democracy. But today one wonders. Of course there is an enormous literature of Catholic "exposure," far too much of it, for it has inhibited inquiry and discussion by the unbiased. What we need is objective investigation by generous minds, eager to discover and proclaim the good, of which there is so much.

Even the commercial newspaper's taboo against any slightest criticism of positions taken by the Church or even by a single priest or bishop needs to be reëxamined. That taboo is based on the well founded journalistic axiom that such criticism inevitably means a disastrous boycott. Yet there are cities in which Catholics have abused their minority power where an honest newspaper frankly and fairly critical of these abuses might not only survive Catholic boycott but prosper. For there is a growing resentment that has its source not at all in religious prejudice, or even in this or that instance of Catholic interference, but in the rankling consciousness that even the fairest and mildest public discussion of issues on which the Catholics are committed is suppressed as effectually as it would be by a Gestapo. And if we can win the confidence and help of Catholics who see the dangers both to their church and to the democratic cause inherent in the reactionary Catholic aggression, our fight will be half won.

GEORGE P. WEST

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Soldiers' Prose[1]

Dear Mr Anthony

DEAR MR ANTHONY,

I listen to your program on the radio all the time and I am empressed with your ideas, so if you do not mind I would like to trouble you with a problem myself. I am not in trouble with any women and my in-laws are pretty good to me, but this is a different kind of a problem, in fact it is not my problem at all, it is Luis problem.

Luis sleeps in the bed next to me in the barrack, he is a pvt too, but right now he is in the hospital with his head bashed in something terrible.

I think I better start from the beginning about Luis, I hope this does not bore you Mr Anthony, and I am sorry to use up your valuable time, but Luis is a friend of mine and a good guy and I would like to help him if I could. You see Mr Anthony Luis is a Porta Riccan from the West Indies, he is a American alright, but the first time you see him you would think he is a Nigro because his skin is so dark. The first day I come into the barrack and see him sitting on the bed next to me I think I am sleeping next to a Nigro and I cant figgure it out because I know the army, I have been in the army three mos, and they do not even want you to talk to Nigros much less sleep in a barrack with them. But like I said Luis is not a Nigro he is a American from Porta Ricco and his skin is very dark, also he does not speak English so good, and sometimes you don't even know what he is saying so you just laugh.

Well Mr Anthony, Luis is alright in camp, we all know him and think he is a good guy, we kid with him about his girl in town who he carries a picture of, she is not very pretty but there is lots of her and Luis likes that. Like I say, in camp we all know Luis but when he goes to town to see his girl or have a few beers he gets in trouble, and this is what I want to talk to you about Mr Anthony.

The other night Luis is sitting with his girl at the Boars Head Tavern and I run into him there and we have a few beers. Luis is feeling pretty good and he puts his arm around his girl as far as it will go and he grins at me, we are all enjoying ourself until this guy comes up. He is a soldier, I dont know him, but I have seen him looking at us for a long time and drinking his beer, and all of a sudden he gets up and comes over to our table looking mean with his teeth showing, and he tells Luis, Hey, nigger, get back to your own part of town and keep your hands off the white girls, you nigger bastard, he calls Luis.

Luis does not understand English too good, like I said, and this guy does not talk clear, so Luis grins at him. Then the guy says something else about a dirty nigger with his arm around a white girl, and he grabs Luis by the jacket and hoists him out of his seat.

Luis does not understand English too good, but he understands what this guy is doing with his hands and he tries to get rid of him gentle and tells him friendly to leave go, but the guy keeps talking louder and pointing to Luis and saying what is a nigger bastard doing in this part of town feeling up a white girl, and he grabs Luis tighter and then lets go one right in Luis face. Luis falls back against the table for a minute, his mouth bleeding, and it is the first time I ever seen him mad. He starts for this guy and they mix it up right there, and the girl screams and it is some ruckus and before you know it there is an MP.

This MP takes one look at the fight, he is holding his billie, and he sees Luis dark skin and that is all there is to it. They have to take Luis back to camp in the ambulance, and the way his head looks it near makes me sick.

I am sorry to take so much of your valuable time Mr Anthony, but I would like to know that we can do about Luis, there has been a lot of talk in our company, and everybody is worryed about him, he will pull through alright this time but it can happen again. I am not sure what is the difference between a Nigro and a American, I have seen lots of Nigros with skin lighter than Luis, but Luis is a American alright.

I hope you can help Luis Mr Anthony and figgure out an anser to this problem. I listen to your program all the time and you are very clever.

SGT. ALAN STERN

[1] This is one of a series of articles and sketches submitted in our Soldiers' Prose competition. These are paid for at our regular rates and there is also a special prize for the best entry submitted during each calendar month. – THE EDITORS

Middle West

It might be stones; it might be sheep;
it might be posts or men:
so far the eye goes west before
it travels back again.
Yet every tree grows up alone
between the earth and sky
as though its separateness were what
the Lord would judge it by.

The frugal house, the ample barn,
the curve of copper stream
across the corn take on the small
inconsequence of dream.
And yet the silo seems to be,
above their huddled shade,
the only perfect, finished thing
a man has ever made.

EDITH HENRICH

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Washington Notes

The WPB v. the Services

THE TEMPERATURE of press and public has failed to respond measurably to news of the latest controversy, or rather, the latest phase of the on-going controversy between the War Production Board on one side and the army and navy on the other over control of armament and munitions production.

Reduced to its essentials and perhaps a little oversimplified in the process, the basis for the quarrel on the home front is this: Donald M. Nelson, chief of the WPB, and C. E. Wilson, his chief of staff, want to decide not only how much scarce raw material shall be allotted to the services for production of planes, tanks, guns and all the other items essential to war, but also how these materials shall be used once the allotment has been made. Assistant Secretary of Navy James V. Forrestal and Assistant Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson, representing the services, want the WPB to bow itself out of the picture and, following allotment, leave things to them.

Also involved is the seat of ultimate authority to contract for military supplies—to sign and seal production contracts. This power now rests with the military, and has from the beginning. However much he may be affected by WPB policies, the arms manufacturer deals in the end directly with the services, satisfies their inspectors and meets their specifications. In the actual process of production, the WPB remains in the background as a policy-making body. The army and navy are the government's agents on the production line, from its beginning to its end. Nelson and Wilson now want to do some of the production-line supervising themselves. By exercising powers delegated to him by the President, Nelson, at least theoretically, can do so. By redelegating some of his powers, he can give Wilson authority to do so. Nelson undertook such a redelegation in an executive order issued last week. The army and navy kicked to the President. And that is where things now stand.

In the process of the bringing the pot to this boil, Nelson dropped Ferdinand Eberstadt, one of his deputies. Eberstadt, who had come to the WPB from the Army-Navy Munitions Board, was regarded as the spokesman for the services in the WPB. He had balked at surrendering his own authority over materials allocation to Wilson in compliance with an order from Nelson. So long as Eberstadt had this authority, the relationship between the WPB and the services was not vitally altered even though Eberstadt, under a system he devised and called the controlled-materials plan, directed on behalf of the WPB the allocation of various materials to the army and navy. Eberstadt's dismissal was vigorously protested by Forrestal and Patterson both to Nelson and the President. At one point they were reported threatening to resign unless the Nelson-Wilson coup was undone.

The Senate Truman Committee, after listening to spokesmen for both sides, refused to back either and expressed the hopeful opinion that everything would turn out all right in the end. The White House denied public reports that James F. Byrnes, the economic stabilizer, and other presidential advisers were urging appointment of Bernard Baruch to Nelson's place on the theory that he alone had the tact and prestige necessary to restore peace between the WPB and the services. Even so, Baruch's appointment either to Nelson's place or to the chairmanship of a new production super-board with supervisory power over both the WPB and the services was considered a possible solution. It was said to be favored by Forrestal and Patterson, since Baruch had seemed to side with Eberstadt in the earlier stages of the controversy.

Whether the President finally supports Nelson and Wilson or capitulates to the demands of Patterson and Forrestal will depend upon his choice of production experts, as such, not on any impersonal theory of production. This is not, except incidentally, a question of army-navy versus civilian control of war production. However it is settled, the settlement will not mean anything in terms of post-war economic organization. Wilson partisans in the government, and there are many, insist that he is the most effective production man who has yet turned up in this war.

They tell the story of valves as one of their proofs. It seems that valves of a similar kind are needed for production of synthetic rubber, escort ships and high-octane gasoline. Scarcity of these valves became a bottleneck several months ago. Wilson decided that the bottleneck could be broken by standardizing the specifications for these valves. Putting his theory to the test over the objections of army and navy production men, he standardized, and as a result this particular shortage is being licked. Wilson's admirers insist that the services, if left to themselves, would still be specifying a variety of valves and waiting for slow production. They contend that Wilson should be free, as he is under Nelson's latest executive order, to institute other such speed-ups by order rather than by persuasion.

The nub of the case for Wilson is that he is a production expert in his own right and not dependent on the advice of others. In private life, Wilson is a General Electric executive and a business statesman of considerable stature. General Electric researchers, under his direction, started working on post-war plans immediately after Pearl Harbor and their thinking on the subject is the most hopeful that has emerged or is likely to emerge from the business community. It dovetails in many particulars and in general with the thinking of such government agencies as the National Resources Planning Board. Labor has long regarded Wilson as one of the few liberal social thinkers on the management side of the table. On the other hand, Forrestal, Patterson and Eberstadt, in spite of their Wall Street background, are regarded as enlightened middle-of-the-roaders politically. There is good reason for hope, whatever the President does about the squabble, that this year's war-production figures will be staggering, measured against anything anyone thought or dreamed of before Pearl Harbor. In spite of muddling, management obstruction in the early stages of the program, the Knudsen interlude and everything else, America's productive genius has come through and will continue to come through. Conversion is complete. Scarcities in manpower and materials have developed, but none of them is unbeatable. We are getting what it takes to win.

Washington T. R. B.

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Fresh Matters

The Moon Vine, by Patricia Coleman. Morosco Theatre, February 11, 1943.

MISS LUCINDA BALLARD has already hit off some capital designing this season for the skating "Stars on Ice," at the Center Theatre. Her costumes there have vigor, lightness and a sailing line that are appropriate to such a show. They suggest strong bodies in them and yet seem of the ballet. The setting for the old Louisiana house with its porch and enveloping greens in "The Moon Vine," except for some hard lighting, comes off unusually well. The clothes are pretty and are home-made looking, as they should be. All of which leads very pleasantly into the new little comedy at the Morosco.

The whole occasion of "The Moon Vine" has a fresh sense of refinement about it, of native Americana not spoiled with punches and wisecracks and commonness. This is true of Miss Coleman's writing itself, her characters and their locale, and of Mr. John Cromwell's directing; and it is true of the general tone of the acting as a whole. The story is an easy and rambling piece, though a good deal manages to go on before it ends and a wide array of emotions come into action. In the midst of the familiar list of cousins, aunts and uncles and neighbors in any old Southern house, the young girl is secretly stage-struck, though engaged to a missionary, and is also secretly enamored of a young man from the neighborhood who had run off to join a show company. He gets into trouble innocently in a New Orleans house of sin, there are some political repercussions, he is willing to go into the ministry or be a missionary if the girl will only love him. Meanwhile there is a silent, self-sacrificing adorer of the young lady.

That is enough of the play to show that it will require qualities in the writing that will make for freshness of effects, for charm, a certain amount of more or less realistic sentiment, and for a hint of lovable farce. "The Moon Vine" has these to a degree; it seemed to me to show much genuine, free talent and promise as well. It is its own worst enemy during the earlier scenes, where the patter and rambling about need to be focused into the plot line. The play is well worth the trouble.

Of the minor characters many are agreeably played. Of the more important roles Mr. Philip Bourneuf, as the self-effacing, ever helpful admirer, with speeches that are sometimes heavy with old-style, high-minded writing, even for a formal Creole, played well, as did Mr. A. Winfield Hoeny, who was highly convincing with his roaring hypocrite revivalist.

Miss Haila Stoddard as the love-sick, stage-struck romantical young lady has a role with a very wide range. The first night of "The Moon Vine" may have missed fire somewhat, as can happen, since the reviews next morning appeared to take her with holy calm. I saw Miss Stoddard's second night, and thought it a beautiful performance, full of variety in tone, lyric and witty. She has a lovely stage quality. She needs only a trifle more assertiveness or egotism. Last season Mr. Arthur Franz did excellent work as the young son in "Hope for a Harvest," with Fredric March and Florence Eldridge. I saw him do equally well, or better, last summer in Saroyan's "Afton Water." In "The Moon Vine" he has an unusually exacting role, a great many things to do and feel, including a flash of tap-dancing. Above all his other good points, Mr. Franz has that rare thing in actors—though it is what is most needed on the stage—which is responsiveness, the ability to give and take. He is easy to act with. Professional players will know what that implies. I should say that Mr. Franz is the best young actor who has turned up on Broadway in a good many seasons.

STARK YOUNG

To What Base Uses

WITH WAR NERVES and prosperity sending more and more people to the movies, the studios are creating good films like "Shadow of a Doubt" and also slapping together any old thing, but in either case seeing the movie break attendance records wherever it is shown. For instance, on one of New York's stormiest mornings this winter a line of people four abreast was wrapped like a bracelet around a square block, waiting in a heavy rain to see the most maudlin movie of any year, "Random Harvest." There is one now, called "Star Spangled Rhythm." Its musical numbers alone seem to be the last gasps of a form even the producers are at their wits' end about: the first one opens on Dick Powell wearing the most insipid little smile ever forced on a singer, then breaking into a song that starts "Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle"; the second one, the factory swing shift, is so grotesque you almost have to think the singers and dancers are sleepwalking; the third, a number by Vera Zorina, is to the ballet what the old-fashioned calendar cutie is to painting.

"Star Spangled Rhythm" also has the weirdest sexual emphasis of any movie I ever saw. In one skit the four male actors, Milland, Tone, MacMurray and Overman, show how they would act if they were women, which is such watered-down female impersonating that it is nothing but pointless vulgarity. Further on, the Misses Goddard, Lake and Lamour describe their boredom with their sex appeal and are followed with a rather better female parody by three of Paramount's homeliest males. Finally, at the picture's end, Zorina steps down from her photograph on a soldier's table, to stand before him ten inches tall but alive. The soldier wakes up, making with his eyes, mouth and hands like Boris Karloff, and grabs at her, the movie producer implying indescribable rape and strangulation at the same moment. Talk about your horror.

Even worse than all of these distortions of decent vulgarity (which would be a creative female impersonation, for instance, or an honest burlesque joke that is funny as well) is the obscene—there is no other word for it—rush the movies are now giving Negroes, with a part set aside in each musical for an (all) Negro act. Now we are going to be democratic; it's the fashion. This is not in any way to say the movies have changed their attitude toward Negroes; there is just more of it. As witness the wholly objectionable caricature of Negro dress and dancing in the zoot-suit number, in which Rochester and Katharine Dunham sing and dance something you could spend all your life in Harlem and never see the like of. Then there is the complete cancellation of the talent for rhythmic singing of the Golden Gate Quartet by putting them into a silly song and negating whatever effect their voices might have had by making the men clown.

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This movie blatantly misuses more talents than any other picture in recent history, giving the most stupid and ordinary turns to Bing Crosby, Jerry Colonna, Victor Moore, Mary Martin, besides those already mentioned.

It has some good laughs. Sterling Holloway's long-legged zany parody of Veronica Lake is one. A skit in which Alan (Quiet—death approaching!) Ladd takes out of that sinister overcoat a small bow and arrow and shoots the rival gangster dead in a nice parody on the décor of the American pool room, is another. The third and choicest is a shower scene between Bob Hope and William Bendix that is entirely wonderful. If you manage to see just this sequence, which comes about three-quarters of the way through, you should be so lucky. Otherwise I hope I have made it clear—and the people and newspaper critics standing in line are at least half as much to blame as Hollywood —that this movie would scare Dracula. MANNY FARBER

A Communication

The Disenchanted

SIR: It is not only the Expedientists who have a hard time these days, trying to answer the criticism of incensed American liberals and European anti-fascists. The refugee anti-fascists, too, find it hard to stand the sneers of their enemies, the fascists, who regard them as traitors because they are siding with the United Nations against the governments of their own countries. All those who see in the President a great liberal statesman know instinctively how he must hate to endorse people whom he himself had called traitors and criminals not so long ago. The President's admirers would never be so unfair to him as to believe a word of his optimistic reports on the political situation in North Africa. Likewise, those who admire the anti-fascists need not be told by them how distasteful the mere mention of the "great ideals of the United Nations" must be to them; how sad and hollow such words sound today, and how hard they must find it to keep this disillusionment to themselves. These proud people, whose twenty-year-old foresight is one of the few shining threads in modern history, have had nothing to hold to all this time but a good cause; while their enemies had everything, from unrestricted political freedom, and power, to ingratiating and respectful treatment by the State Department—everything but a good cause; but even with material advantages they found it difficult to defend their "faith" from anti-fascist attacks, because it was so easy for the anti-fascists to attack them: for the latter happened to be right, and they did not have to get all involved in lies, reticences and contradictions. But now it is the anti-fascists who are involved in lies and reticences, and it is a bitter experience for them. It is a bitter experience for them that now, just on the eve of victory, they must seek desperately for an answer that will silence the fascist opponent—and find nothing to say.

You can almost hear these triumphant fascists whispering into their ears, like evil shapes gathering out of dark corners: We told you so, we told you so. . . . And there is more that these demons are saying: "Why did you align yourselves with the enemies of your country?" they whisper. "We always spoke of nationalism as the only truth; you, you fools, spoke of ideals greater than all the national boundaries and ambitions of the earth, and you got all excited whenever you heard someone in a responsible position pay tribute to those high ideals at official luncheons. But of all the places in the entire world, the only one where the neglect of your ideals is not likely to have disastrous consequences is a luncheon table. But now behold what they do in the places where democracy must work if men are to live in peace, surmounting the stresses of creed, religion, color or language: ideals are rejected as impractical, and good old dirty fascist methods are employed. Those who like yourselves speak of ideals become the Hosanna Shouters; while people like ourselves, who spit on ideals, are thanked and praised for delivering the goods."

Yes; this is what the little Fascist gremlins are whispering. And any anti-fascist who does not want them to push him off the high road into a gaping abyss must shun a fascist in exactly the same manner as a fascist shunned him a few short months ago. Ever since Darlan's ghastly shadow clouded the horizon, this writer has been canvassing many an Italian community in this country, and he has found that the former fascists, who had doubted the wisdom of Mussolini up to a short time ago, are now more fascist than ever, and just as worried over Darlan as the truest American liberals. They don't see the North African fascists as instruments of the United States Government, but much rather the United States Government as an instrument of these fascists. And they know that fascists cannot afford the luxury of staying aimless: their aims are clear and disquieting to their prospective victims. And now the fascist Italians are saying: "This is no longer a war between American democracy and Italian fascism. This is French fascism against Italian fascism, and the French remember 1940. They hate us. They will cut Italy to pieces."

It was painful for this writer to find nothing to say; to catch himself to his great shame mumbling the usual weak arguments of expediency and blind hope; only to hear his own thoughts thrown at him in the voice of a fascist. Do the State Department expedientists really believe that after the war is over—with the Italian generals and the French generals well saddled in power—the people of France or any other country will be free to decide their own destiny? And that by waving their little finger in protest and whispering "No!" with whatever breath is left them after years of starvation, they will be able to oust the generals? If the fiery horse of ruthlessness brings me to the gates of the conquered town, there is no reason for me then to dismount and ride a humble donkey. After a few successful battles the prestige of the worst Nazi-minded general becomes greater and not smaller, and there remains no choice but to recognize him as the new dictator. This simple fact the fascist chieftains know and understand only too well; and to them the State Department's expediency is only another good chance to fool these simpleton Americans. There is at present a rush of Italian generals begging Mussolini to give them a dishonorable dismissal from their posts, and they are begging for it with the same eagerness and for the same personal reasons that made them beg for an appointment when the fascist fortunes were high.

Otto Strasser makes it very clear in a letter to The

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American Mercury; it appears, oddly enough, in the same issue containing the government's case for expediency: an article by a Mr. Kingsbury Smith, who reveals the State Department's intention to "*make a deal with the Junkers, if and when they are ready.*"

It is only logical that the anti-fascists should begin to worry, in the light of these ominous facts, lest they will have to explain some day to the people of Italy why they collaborated with the second wave of fascist tyrants.

In Latin America, where, as everybody knows by now, the Italian problem is of the greatest importance, things are even worse. Fighting anti-fascists in the Argentine, who were doing their bit to help the United Nations and to save American lives by destroying the last citadel of Nazi sea-marauders, are running short of arguments under the new moral system which rations their ideals to give priority to unworthy tricks of dubious origin and still more dubious usefulness. They all feel that, in the face of the present moral setback, it becomes increasingly hard to continue their work on behalf of the United Nations. They feel, and rightly so, that with the creation of a French Imperial Council it becomes impossible to appeal to the Italian people in the name of anything that is not petty nationalism of the worst brand, and nationalism, as everybody knows, is exclusive fascist property. Anyone talking nationalism talks fascism, and cannot speak for the concept of a United Nations. The Latin Americans also know Peyrouton, and the President's recent suggestion, after his return from Casablanca, that the critics look up what Peyrouton did to Laval while a member of the Cabinet, is not going to impress them in the slightest, for they all know that the strife between these men was a competition in treason.

They know that Peyrouton's very first official declaration since his appointment to the new governorship was that he would create a strong army, and a one-party system, because democracy had caused the ruin of France. This, backed by the blood and gold of the greatest democracy on earth! And what was even more significant, the one party would be nameless. Those friends of democracy down there in Argentina understand that the namelessness of this party is nothing but a proof of Peyrouton's good manners, for he knows, as a man of the world, that the word fascism is not accepted in polite State Department conversation, but they don't expect this to mean that Peyrouton intends to surprise them and give them one nice morning with their breakfast, lo, the gift of a nice democracy with all the trimmings of human rights and free speech and so forth, to please them and to shame them at the same time for having doubted their friend Peyrouton, the Jeffersonian.

The Italians in Italy are not blind to these things either, and those poor devils who have been fighting until now with no other reason but fear of their oppressors, perhaps will now have for the first time in these three years a new reason to fight, and this reason will be fear of the *foreign* oppressor. Democracy for them now is something murky and shifting, something way, way back behind the French lines, and even further, behind the desks of French bureaucrats who have access to an obscure Mr. Murphy, who, says the State Department, "is all right."

When Darlan, in his eagerness to show how good he was, called on the Moslems in Tripoli to revolt and promised to bring fire and sword to Italy, the friends of the United Nations in Latin America were greatly alarmed. That episode almost escaped the attention of the United States reader, but the fascist press in Latin America saw to it that it was given the widest possible publicity. And the fascists were the first ones to ask: In the name of what ideals does this admiral speak? And most unfortunately for the cause of democracy, they were right, for the traitorous admiral spoke in the name of no ideals; and the anti-fascists could do nothing but endorse with their embarrassed silence or with their even more embarrassed words this criticism. Here is one of the many things which the French in North Africa should not be allowed to classify under "internal matters." This was a military move affecting all the anti-fascists in the world, having a direct and most unfortunate bearing on the morale of the enemy, for it strengthened it. Nothing has discredited democracy more thoroughly in these four years than that appeal made by one of the darkest traitors of recent history.

When the fascists accuse the Americans of serving the interests of French imperialism and fascism, they are again the masters of the field: there is no way of denying this, for the simple reason that it happens to be the truth. Giraud gets away with the most impertinent reminders that the United States should mind its own business and like it. Only a Bourbon could speak with more arrogance. And still, he is a baby newly born to Mother Expediency, and if one takes the trouble of comparing his language with the endless apologies that President Roosevelt made for the arrival of the liberating United States Army, one is compelled to say that with such people all respect is wasted. Being dictators, they are slaves, and they only respect the hand that whips them.

The Vichy government never used such strong language with the Germans, even when they did interfere in internal matters, as they did all the time, with requests ranging from the requisitioning of food to the shooting of all those who were guilty of hoarding in their hearts a greater amount of real patriotism than had been allotted them under the rationing system set up by Pétain. These things leave the anti-fascist in the Americas almost completely devoid of weapons; he might almost as well give up the fight and go into hiding. At least this way he will avoid making a fool of himself in his vain attempt to explain the unexplainable, and to guess what lie tomorrow's expediency might ask of them. Those anti-fascists look back to the time when any Italian who was unwilling to reject Mussolini could be shamed ten times a day; they remember the moral strain of those conservative-minded people who were trying to defend fascism abroad only because they believed in the slogan, "Right or wrong, my country," and did not have the moral courage to believe in this: "Right, my country; wrong, it is my duty to my country to make it right again." Today they cannot stand the humiliation of finding themselves in the same predicament while trying to defend at all costs the dwindling unity of the United Nations. They are of course all very much aware that the first enemy is the Axis, but it makes a defender very vulnerable to know that he is defending something not because it is good, but simply because something else is worse.

New York City GUITTONE ZANNUTELLI

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The Bandwagon

"The Russians are winning the war because they are all good chess players," says Al Horowitz, international master of the game. – *Quoted in an AP dispatch from Los Angeles.*

One thing that can be predicted with confidence about 1943 is that the war will dominate the current business picture. – *From an editorial in Business Week.*

He went on to say that such strikers should be charged with treason or be inducted into the army. Other remarks in his address showed clearly that he has given much thought to the labor situation. – *Rep.-elect O. C. Fisher, as reported in The Coleman, Texas, Democrat-Voice.*

Slowly Is No Word for It

But it must be remembered that, in this respect as in dealing with the Jewish question, General Giraud intends to go slowly.

His statement this week and his subsequent avowal of his intention to "relax" anti-Jewish restrictions have been criticized on the ground that the two relaxations he cited—the return of property seized from Jews and the admission of Jewish children to local schools—have no real bearing on the point. It is pointed out, first, that the French army may requisition Jewish property as soon as it is turned back to its rightful owners, and, second, that the schools are not open now and hence the approval of the entrance of Jewish students into high schools and technical schools is meaningless. – *From The New York Times.*

Oo, La, La!

The waist-band skirt has front kick pleat and side placket. Wear it with your vari-colored dickies and blouses; or wear it alone with a string of pearls. – *From Ward's Midwinter Sales Book, 1943.*

The Land of Plenty

Furthermore, there is and always has been a minimum security that has been guaranteed to the citizens of this country regardless of whether or not they had made any provision for it themselves or whether or not they deserved it. There have always been soup kitchens for men who were hungry, regardless of merit. There have always been poor-houses for old people who have made no provision for their old age. There have always been Potters Fields for those who made no other provision for their burial. Any plan for Social Security which has yet been seriously proposed is but an attempt to provide these minimums in a more orderly fashion and in a more decent fashion. Beyond that we do not believe it is the province of our government to provide. – *An editorial in The Weekly Underwriter.*

Present Indicative

She went up the Burma Road with shoes by Bendel and Chanel No. 5; crossed the Gobi Desert with luggage by Gilmore and clothes by Bergdorf; and romped around Russia long enough to produce a sort of international "Past Imperfect." – *An advertisement for Alice-Leone Moats's new book, "Blind Date with Mars," in The New York Times.*

Total-War Department

He explained plans for totalization—all luxuries to go, rich and poor alike to share sacrifices, shirkers to be prosecuted, fashion shops and beauty parlors to be closed, hundreds of thousands of workers put into industry, even horseback riding for pleasure in Berlin ended by official edict. – *Goebbels' most recent speech to the German people, as reported in The New York Herald Tribune.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

MacArthur and Politics

SIR: The article by Irving Brant in your issue of December 28, "The Truth About General MacArthur," did a serious injustice to a group of American correspondents, including two who have lost their lives while serving with American troops, which deserves and requires correction.

The article terms the charge that politics entered into the division of command in the Southern Pacific between General MacArthur and Admiral Ghormley (now Admiral Halsey) a "slander."

It then proceeds to blame this "slander" on "the cumulative growth of a false impression about General MacArthur's attitude," which, it goes on to say, "was due to something for which American correspondents are responsible—the illegitimate use of the dateline 'General MacArthur's Headquarters' over stories written in all parts of Australia (often rehashed from Australian newspapers), on subjects ranging from strategic pipe-dreams to invasion-jittery criticism of the conduct of the war in the Pacific."

This is completely and entirely false in every respect and in every implication.

The dateline "General MacArthur's Headquarters" was used by correspondents attached to that headquarters on orders from the American censor. It was often used under protest by the correspondents. Frequently it was written on their copy by the censor. It was never used by any correspondent writing from any point except Headquarters.

The idea that what the group of American correspondents in Australia was writing was not a true reflection of General MacArthur's Headquarters is nonsense. Seldom has a more strict military censorship ever been maintained. Control was maintained over subject matter and treatment of subjects. General MacArthur's Headquarters did not necessarily agree with all the strategic views expressed by correspondents, but you may be sure that no criticism of the conduct of the war emanated from any American correspondent in Australia which was not approved at Headquarters. And in nine cases out of ten, any such criticism, or dissatisfaction, which emanated from Australia emanated directly from Headquarters, where the most complete dissatisfaction did exist over:

1. The fact that General MacArthur was given reasons for leaving the Philippines which proved on his arrival in Australia to have been false.

2. The fact that for seven weeks after his arrival in Australia he was a "Supreme Commander" so far as the newspaper headlines were concerned, but a commander of nothing so far as his credentials were concerned.

3. The fact that even after he was given command of the Southwest Pacific area he was given a bare minimum of tools to work with, a minimum so far short of what was needed even to defend that area that the idea of conducting a campaign to retake the Philippines became a mockery. He had been in-

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duced to leave the Philippines on the promise that he would be given the means to return. He had left under protest on the assumption that he would be leading a relief expedition back at once.

When the dispatches of American correspondents in Australia reflected some of this dissatisfaction they were not writing out of their own heads. They were writing straight from Headquarters. The idea of blaming them with "illegitimate" journalistic devices is a malicious injustice to them and also one which falls down entirely as a means of wiping out the fact of General MacArthur's extreme dissatisfaction with the treatment accorded him at that period of the war.

The author of your article, Irving Brant, can confirm this by conferring with the correspondents of his own newspaper, The Chicago Sun, who were among those also present in Australia at the time.

JOSEPH C. HARSCH

Washington News Bureau of The Christian Science Monitor, Washington, D. C.

SIR: I accept and welcome Mr. Harsch's statement that American correspondents were ordered to use the dateline "General MacArthur's Headquarters," virtually by the General himself. (Edward Angly says the order came from his press representative, not the censor.) That was my original supposition. Having no proof of it, I redrafted my article when an official defending General MacArthur placed the responsibility on the correspondents. The effect of Mr. Harsch's disclosure is to reverse conclusions I had stated that were favorable to General MacArthur, and to lay him open to criticisms that I did not make.

Mr. Harsch is incorrect in saying that I blamed the political slander on misuse of the dateline, for I said the slander arose in the Philippines, six months before the dateline appeared. I said that stories appearing under the MacArthur dateline helped to perpetuate the canard, and my error was in stating that General MacArthur bore no responsibility for those stories. Here, in brief, is the needed modification of my article of December 28:

1. Since the shift in dateline was from "Allied Headquarters," the motive in ordering it was not military secrecy but personal publicity.

2. The same motive may be assumed to govern the issuance, by General MacArthur, of communiqués during the Battle of the Coral Sea, giving information which Admiral Nimitz, commander of the American forces in that battle, desired withheld from the Japanese.

3. General MacArthur conducted a propaganda campaign, directed against the decisions of his superior officers, which, had it been successful, would have prevented the landing of an American army in North Africa and would have rendered impossible the strategic decisions reached at Casablanca.

4. The Marines at Guadalcanal, and the army forces under General Harmon, suffered even more severely for lack of supplies and reinforcements, and for the same reason—lack of ships. Therefore, the shortage was not due to discrimination.

Mr. Harsch was told in Australia that General MacArthur went seven weeks with nothing but "newspaper headlines" to show that he was supreme commander. I was told here that President Roosevelt's request for recognition of General MacArthur as supreme commander was transmitted to Prime Minister Curtin, in a letter from General Brett, on March 17, the day MacArthur landed. The full text of the letter was published in The Melbourne Argus of March 19. On March 25 the Australian Associated Press reported an address of Mr. Curtin to the House, saying that "the Australian government had given authority of the highest order to the American general, Douglas MacArthur." You can take your choice.

Washington, D. C. IRVING BRANT

The Situation in Spain

SIR: It is said that Spain, as things look now from here, may be the final theatre of this war, as she was the first. Spain has been in the past the battlefield for most of the European conflicts and I doubt whether the unhappy Peninsula will be spared this time. The fact is that Franco is inextricably caught in the web spun around him by the black Nazi spider, and all the diplomatic and political maneuvers to free him and his regime from it are futile. For this reason I doubt whether Archbishop Francis J. Spellman's mission ostensibly to pull Franco away from Hitler will be successful. Paradoxically enough, what keeps Franco in power is the war itself, which provides him with support from different quarters abroad. On the other hand, no one under present circumstances is willing to face the heavy responsibility of establishing a new form of government in Spain. A monarchist restoration without a popular plebiscite would be impossible, and to hold a fair plebiscite now is unthinkable. Furthermore, a popular vote in normal times might bring rather unexpected surprises, as did the municipal elections in 1931, which brought the Second Spanish Republic. But, where are the republicans now?

It is said that Don Juan, one of the two pretenders to the non-existent Spanish throne, is too cautious to return without certain guarantees. As to Francisco Xavier Bourbon Parma, brother of former Empress Zita of Austria, and the pretender backed by the so-called Traditionalist Communion, has not shown so far, any intention of returning to Spain to claim the vacant throne. The choice is between a descendant of Ferdinand VII and a descendant of Ferdinand VII's sister. Is there a Salic Law, or shall the Spaniards fight it all over again?

Only after an Allied victory will Spain regain her political equilibrium, but the manifest destiny of the democracies to deal with the grave Spanish problem as was done in the days of Ferdinand VII—the most despicable of the Bourbon kings—might have disastrous consequences for the Iberian nationalities as well as for ourselves. An immediate rectification of this policy is, therefore, imperative.

New York City J. VENTURA SUREDA

The State Department and Africa

SIR: Congratulations on Varian Fry's analysis of the French debacle in the issue of January 11; let us pray that all the other magazines take it up and we MAY convince the State Department that we really do see through it, which might result in this being a people's war, after all. . . .

Evanston, Ill. ARTHUR J. WARDWELL

From The New Republic Mail Bag

David Y. Thomas, of the University of Texas, forwards a commentary on the poll-tax issue:

"I hold no brief for or against the abolition of the requirement of the payment of a poll tax as a prerequisite for voting," Mr. Thomas says, "but I do hold one, self-assumed, for the observance of the Constitution. Anyone who can read the Constitution can see that it plainly and unmistakably says that 'the electors [of members of Congress] shall have the qualifications for the electors of the most numerous branch of the state legislature.' Our courts, including the Supreme Court, have said more than once that the states have a right to require the payment of a poll tax as a prerequisite for voting and that the 'privileges' of the Fourteenth Amendment do not include the right to vote. . . . If Congress is to abolish the poll tax as a requirement for voting, the only legal way to do it is to amend the Constitution so as to give it that power. While doing that, why not make suffrage truly national by giving Congress power to make the requirements uniform throughout the United States."

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Books in Review

Who Was Right About Spain?

IT IS NOW a little more than four years since Franco took Barcelona. At the end of March he was in Madrid, after permitting the British Foreign Office to smooth his way. Until that moment Spain had been the center of the world struggle. Millions of us had followed the news from the front, while realizing that the outcome of the war would be determined in London and Paris, in Rome and Berlin and Washington. We said that the Spanish Republic was fighting our battle. We said that if the dictators triumphed in Spain, they would go on to conquer Czecho-Slovakia, then France, then the whole of Europe country by country, leaf by leaf, as if they were eating a huge artichoke. The State Department did not agree with us; it hastened to recognize Franco three days after his final victory. Then silence fell: it was as if Spain had been detached from Europe and moved to the Antipodes.

At last we have a trustworthy account of what happened there after Franco's victory. It is called "Appeasement's Child,"[1] and it is written by Thomas J. Hamilton, who went to Madrid in 1939 as correspondent for The New York Times and who stayed until a few months before Pearl Harbor. Mr. Hamilton is no left-wing intellectual with vaguely communistic sympathies. In Madrid he lived on excellent terms with many of Franco's young men. His book depends chiefly on fascist sources, and the first chapter is addressed to that right-thinking minority of Americans who wanted Franco to win because they were afraid of the Reds. In this connection he uses the pronoun "we," as if he had begun by sharing their opinions. Let us see what he has to report, now that he is no longer forced to submit his dispatches to Franco's censors.

He reports, first of all, that Spain is by far the hungriest country in Western Europe. The wheat crop, on which it chiefly depends, fell from a pre-war average of 160,000,000 bushels to 79,000,000 bushels in 1940. A few provinces in the northwest have abundant supplies of milk and potatoes, but these never reach the central and southern provinces because of poor communications and official blunders. Madrid, where the masses have scarcely enough to keep them alive, is lucky compared with Barcelona, Seville and Alicante. Yet there is plenty of food for the few people who can afford to patronize expensive restaurants or buy venison from Serrano Suñer's butcher.

He reports, in the second place, that the hatreds of wartime are being kept alive. The newspapers still thunder daily against the Red barbarians. The bodies of executed fascists are still being disinterred and given state funerals. Death is still the punishment for most political offenses, although the firing squads are somewhat less overworked than they were in 1940. The prisons, however, are still overcrowded with men waiting trial for the capital offense of being republicans.

He reports that the ruling class is divided into quarreling factions. Different groups in the Falange, or fascist party, are fighting one another, while all of them oppose the Army and the Church. Business men are being controlled and regulated into bankruptcy; they growl that Franco's government is "Redder than the Reds." The big landlords stand aside, having regained their privileges; they now hope for the return of the Bourbon kings. Hardly anybody believes that the present regime can outlast the war.

He reports that, in spite of needing every possible product that men can grow, dig or manufacture, Spain is suffering from unemployment. He reports that very little progress is being made toward repairing the damages caused by the war, even though these were far less extensive than people believed in 1939. Finally he reports that the present crisis in Spain was caused, not by unavoidable disasters, but chiefly by the policies of Franco's government, which has tried to impose a totalitarian economy on a country lacking in technical resources, which has been shipping part of its food and the best of its raw materials to Germany in exchange for nothing but promises, and which has proved to be incredibly corrupt and absolutely incapable of governing the nation it conquered. Talking with people who had fought on Franco's side, Mr. Hamilton found most of them disillusioned and convinced in their hearts that the day of reckoning was still to come. He pitied them even more, so he says, than he did the republican prisoners starving in Franco's jails, and waiting.

More interesting to me than Mr. Hamilton's general conclusions—for after all he does not pretend to be a political theorist, any more than he is a professional man of letters—are his anecdotes of daily life under a fascist government. There is, for example, the story of all the red tape he had to untangle and all the officials he had to bribe or flatter before he could import a box of food for his baby; and there is the picture of the starving children he saw on the road from Seville. In certain minor ways, the supporters of Franco seem to act as their opponents might have acted if they had won the war. Mr. Hamilton describes, at one point, a meeting of fascist intellectuals that sounds for all the world like a meeting of communist intellectuals. He makes you feel that there are good and bad men on both sides of the struggle, and that some of the fascists are full of generous aspirations. Unfortunately, they are caught in a false political pattern, and their best schemes only lead to new disasters for Spain.

Their country is part of the Axis: on that point Mr. Hamilton leaves no doubt whatever. The chief reason why it hasn't entered the war against us is that Hitler until now has felt that it would be more useful as a pretended neutral. The Spanish army isn't equipped to fight us, but the country is full of airfields built under German directions and stocked with American gasoline. It is also full of German aviators and tank crews masquerading as students or engineers. When the right moment comes, Hitler can occupy Spain in a few days, probably with the help of Franco's government, which knows that it cannot survive

[1] Appeasement's Child: The Franco Regime in Spain, by Thomas J. Hamilton. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 343 pages. $3.

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an Allied victory. Yet the United States has continued its efforts to appease Franco almost from the beginning of his rebellion. The more he made it clear that he was our enemy, the more favors were showered on him in a desperate effort to purchase his tolerance.

In this respect, Mr. Hamilton makes it clear that we have gone far beyond the British. Even Sir Samuel Hoare, the British Ambassador, thought that there was a practical limit to appeasement. When fascist students broke the windows of his embassy, he demanded and promptly received a most contrite apology. When the American embassy was stoned, possibly by the same students, Ambassador Weddell made no public demands whatever. Apparently under instructions from the State Department, he offered Franco a new credit of $100,000,000. That caused such a scandal in Washington that the offer was disavowed, but a still larger credit was then extended by Argentina—with American backing, it seems, although the details are still a secret. No wonder that Franco continues to declaim against the degenerate and weak-kneed democracies.

Back in 1937, I remember talking with American diplomats who were proud of being hard-boiled realists. "Why go around with your head in the clouds?" they said. "You sympathize with the Spanish Loyalists because they say they believe in democracy, but they're just a filthy rabble. They can't win the war, and even if they did, they could never govern Spain. We prefer Franco because, after his victory, we'll know how to make a deal with him." That deal has never been made. Three years after the victory that this country helped him to win, Franco is threatening the success of our great African venture. Just how many of the troops that are needed at the Tunisian front are we keeping in Morocco, to guard against a sudden attack from across the Straits of Gibraltar?

I wrote in 1937, soon after a visit to Madrid:

> What would Spain be like if Franco and his allies conquered there? First of all would come the general slaughter of his enemies that has been promised now for more than a year. But afterwards what would happen in the graveyard? Some people think that Franco would be faced by a whole series of insurrections, by unending guerrilla warfare: I cannot agree with them. The Spaniards are the bravest people in Europe, but it is not in their nature to continue fighting for a lost cause. They would be more likely to sink back into apathy. The peasants would lose the land they had lately won. The mineral resources of the country would be exploited by Germans and Italians. There would be some reforestation (which is part of the fascist program) and some new irrigation projects, but not enough of them to interfere with the big landed proprietors. The schools would be closed or turned back to the Jesuits. Under the weight of its ancient institutions, the country would sleep and decay, as it slept and decayed in the eighteenth century.

Most of this prophecy has been fulfilled, item by item. The end of it, however, was completely mistaken, and for a reason that should be brought into the open. Like many liberals, I used to have too much respect for fascist efficiency, which I confused with German efficiency. I thought that if Franco conquered Spain, he could at least rule the country in the fashion of the Spanish kings. But instead of a government, what he has given Spain is three years of feeble despotism and blustering anarchy.

MALCOLM COWLEY

The Cymbalon

The Human Comedy, by William Saroyan. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 291 pages. $2.75.

RUNNING THROUGH SAROYAN'S WORK, and now the hero of "The Human Comedy," is the figure of a telegraph boy—a modern American Mercury, riding his bike as Mercury ran on the winds, with a blue cap for an astral helmet and a telegraph blank waving the great tidings in his hand. Like most of us, Saroyan comes from that class to which a telegram is never a message, but always an intimation of disaster or great change, the first sounding of some awful ceremony. But here, as Saroyan saw it as a boy, the ceremony is seen through the eyes of the telegraph messenger, and it makes him an ubiquitous folk-character and something of a priest. As he brings news to men he symbolically brings them to each other; as he flits along the American towns, he beats his wings as if to embrace all the lonely Saroyan souls in them. Everything proximate to this boy is part of the human comedy; and he is everywhere. Homer Macauley stands for youth, for expectancy, for the keenness of an adolescence spent in the offices at night, where the sense of danger is gulped down like midnight coffee, and where each ticking brings some special knowledge. But he stands even more for the easy Saroyan knowledge of America, and the easier access to it; he stands for the struggle between his native innocence and the world's experience; and that is the point of the story.

This boy unites the American strands in himself; he carries them all. In his life can be heard the pulsing of all the telegraph keys over America—the silvery piping of all those interlocked metals and wires, the grim, visored men listening to the beat of each other's hands, listening to that telegraph heart beating over America. All the locked doors open to this boy; all the reverberations of the national experience are to be heard in him. But he is not only an agent; he is a hero; and his education is the drama of the book, his learning to cry, like Blake: "O Rose, thou art sick!" He is Saroyan's white dove, singing his songs of innocence and being soiled by the world's experience. Everything about him is pure, mock-Grecian in its sunniness and youth. Part of him is Oliver Optic—a grubby American hero supporting his widowed mother and little brother by carrying messages after school; pure and undefeated, but with no time to play, losing the dream girl to the rich brat across the aisle. Yet the town he lives in is Ithaca; his California is an old earth, but the last, as it were, to be settled by men; the last to have retained the old American innocence, the yea-saying power; and he has a little brother named Ulysses.

Ulysses' little adventures are to Homer's as the adventures of the classical Ulysses were to the adventures of Homer's imagination. Ulysses is in the chrysalis, or the purely physical, stage of the world's disillusion; he has only preposterous little adventures. He goes with an idiot friend to the public library and they stare at the covers; he gets caught in a bear trap at a shop while people watch painfully through the window, and the aimless frolic of Ulysses' life is defined by the Dadaist touch of deadly simplicity which Saroyan adds when the child is freed:

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"The crowd in front of the store cheered, but not effectively, as they were unorganized and had no leader." Or you may see him, as in one of Don Freeman's friendly head drawings, staring up at the ceiling, just wondering.

But Homer has entered into the human realm; everything he sees on his rounds leads him from the songs of innocence to the songs of experience; and where he saw only Blake's lamb, and was the lamb, he now sees the "tyger burning bright." But this is an exaggeration, for there are no tygers in Saroyan's conception of the human experience; there is only a wistful attrition of sadness. He does not even see deceit, ugliness, violence—they are not in Saroyan's world; he merely brings the messages of death from the War Department to the locked houses. (Saroyan, a quick fellow, is perhaps the first American writer to have made imaginative use of America's participation in the Second World War.) He talks to old Grogan at the telegraph office, a sot; he hears the sweetly delirious Saroyan lovers, lovers who can never find each other; he is hungry and tired, and painfully conscious of his family's poverty. And he wants to know—*"Did He who made the lamb make thee?"*; when he weeps, as a man weeps, he is still more eager to keep his capacity for tears than to revert to his old innocence. "Otherwise I'm just as good as dead myself." That is the height of Homer's experience, the drama in his dismay—he wonders, he wants to know. And now the process is reversed—the tiger that was never a tiger has become a sweetly bleating lamb; the resolution is Love. When he goes to his mother, the youngest, the wisest Penelope in the world, he is comforted, as the Saroyan people are forever comforted, when she confides: "Everything *is* changed—for you. But it is still the same, too. The loneliness you feel has come to you because you are no longer a child. But the whole world has always been full of that loneliness. The loneliness does not come from the War. The War did not make it. It was the loneliness that made the War."

There it is, and there is Saroyan. Having been baptized in the perilous streams of Postal Telegraph, Homer the human foundling is now swimming in goodness and innocence and the easy Saroyan heartbreak. Everyone talks of Love; everyone relapses, like little Ulysses, into being a darling little chick. Even old Grogan hears the heavenly spheres singing together. And Homer's experience in life now becomes like the singing Saroyan describes in a café where some soldiers are gathered around the piano. "Their singing wasn't particularly good, but the feeling with which they sang was not bad at all." The feeling in Saroyan is never bad at all; at times, in fact, it is quite wonderful. I never knew, I must confess, how effective a writer he was until I read "The Human Comedy." He had told me that he was wonderful; now I believe it. But why call this a "novel"? A novel has to have some conception of resolution, some dramatic structure, some sense of process and understanding of conflict. There has, surely, to be something more than this humming flute-music, this succession of exquisite little scenes, all so expert in charm, so calculated to break your heart. What we have here is the Saroyan gallery at its best, a kind of definitive one-man show. Where he once created moods, he now creates characters; but the characters, lovable as they are, only add up into one big mood. That is why the book falls away so soundlessly at the end, where a real novel, structurally composed, would break up when imagination failed. Saroyan's imagination never really fails him; it just remains small, mimetic and careful. Each character is a moment, each is like the separate glistening pebbles that F. M. Ford once described in Hemingway's style; they all glisten with their wonder at life and Saroyan's wonder over them. They are "marvelous," in the Saroyan manner, in the sense that the whole world is marvelous—when evil is not so much ignored as gently named, with gentle stubbornness dismissed; when the secret of each person's charm is his conviction that he is separate and original; when the tone of the human comedy is sweet dismay lost in the reverberations of love.

Years ago, on the East Side of New York, there was a wonderful café owned by a wonderful man who played wonderfully on the Hungarian cymbalon. The cymbalon is never admitted into the orchestra, but when people are together late at night, and there is a feeling of peace in the air, it can sing very powerfully to the human ear. The cymbalon is no doubt an inferior instrument, too exclusively personal; but it has a remarkable characteristic—it plays heart-throbs. Its tremolo is fantastic; the air shivers with it. Reading Saroyan I thought of that wonderful man coming to a table. He plays on his cymbalon; he is enraptured, and his hair falls over his eyes. He paints the Hungarian scene that every cymbalon plays—the trees reflected in the water, perpetual twilight and easy longing. And what does he sing of? He sings of love. At that moment, with the tremolo beating in the drowsy café air, he makes you see that life is not life, at least not the grim-

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ness of it; but the human appeal, the heavy languorous call of love. At that moment he means it, with the cymbalon throbbing before him. At that moment he really means it.

ALFRED KAZIN

The War in the Solomons

Guadalcanal Diary, by Richard Tregaskis. New York: Random House. 265 pages. $2.50.
Battle for the Solomons, by Ira Wolfert. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 200 pages. $2.
Into the Valley, by John Hersey. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 138 pages. $2.
Headhunting in the Solomon Islands, by Caroline Mytinger. New York: The Macmillan Company. 416 pages. $3.

IT IS ALMOST INCREDIBLE that four books relating to the Solomon Islands should be published at virtually the same moment, three of them dealing with the fighting on Guadalcanal, without overlapping chronologically by a single day. Not only do the three war books supplement each other factually, so that all are needed for a full understanding of that amazing campaign, but their approach is so different in spirit that they furnish three distinct facets of the smoky crystal of human behavior in war. For this last reason, if one is reading all of them, they should not be read chronologically.

Richard Tregaskis, writer of "Guadalcanal Diary," has about as brilliant a literary style as a wooden Indian. The first few pages of his book, dealing with the approach of transports to the Solomons last July and early August, prepare one for the prosaic conversion of an observing reporter's daily notes into longer journalistic sentences, and nothing more. The first change comes when, after telling of the unexpectedly easy capture of the Guadalcanal airfield without an opposing shot, Tregaskis goes across to Tulagi and relates, in the knife-sharp words of American officers, the story of the terrible struggle to drive the Japs out of the caves on that island and its little neighbors. Later, when Tregaskis marches with the Marines on Guadalcanal, lies with them in rainy foxholes, sees them die, dodges snipers, smells dead Japs, the factual recital absorbs the drama so completely that the slightest attempt at literary embellishment or wordy thrills would ruin it. In Tregaskis himself there is no portrayal of either heroism or fear. He simply followed the rule for front-line war correspondents. The story always lies where the danger is greatest. They go there, and they don't wear armor. Incidentally, anybody reading Tregaskis' account of the astonishing "scuttlebutt" (false rumor) that spreads through the Marines as the result of a flash of heat lightning (Jap submarine sunk by a cruiser's gunfire) or the sending of a dispatch boat from ship to ship (Melanesian crew arriving after sinking of merchant ship by submarine), can easily understand the famous false report about seamen refusing to unload a cargo. Stories of this type reflect the nervous tension that underlies the cussing heroism of Marines going into battle.

Ira Wolfert reached the Solomons in mid-October, two weeks after Tregaskis left because he couldn't replace his No. 14 shoes. He arrived at the height of the naval fighting, and his book enlarges the scene accordingly. It also furnishes partial, though inadequate, strategic perspective,

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Translated by
Jessie Lemont

Jessie Lemont has worked for thirty years to perfect these translations which, faithful to the spirit of Rilke, are in themselves poems as well as translations. $3.00

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which is not found at all in the "Diary." Wolfert has a flare for word painting and a lively fancy which illuminates his presentation of the visual scene but reduces its factual solidity. "The earth shook like a hammered gong." "This terrible, passionate symphony of war went on . . . brain-smothering." Good figures of speech, but compare the answer of a Marine officer to a question at a Washington press conference: "The air bombing wasn't bad. All we wanted was something to stop those God-awful night bombardments from the sea. They tore everything to pieces." (Even that doesn't tell the whole story, unless you are able to deduce that the unmolested landing of 11,000 Japs next day meant that "everything" included grounded airplanes. Books are yet to be written about Guadalcanal.) When Wolfert gets into a spot where his individual experience calls for descriptive powers matching the intensity of the action, his gift for words is justified. His account of a deadly forty-four-minute duel, in clouds and cloudbursts, between a flying fortress and a Kawanishi 97, is the high spot of the book. It is the high spot because Wolfert was in the nose of the fortress as it did things no bomber is supposed to do. He watched the Jap, watched the twisting strategy of the American pilot, then found himself part of the battle, struggling across the heaving floor to reach a wounded officer whose "face hung down from its bones, all stunned and loose-looking," and later heard the officer ask softly in his ear, "Where am I hit, please?" The end maps in the Tregaskis book are very useful in following the Wolfert narrative.

On October 8, a few days after Tregaskis left and before Wolfert arrived at Guadalcanal, John Hersey went with a company of Marines from a grassy hill (our kind of country) down into the Jap-filled jungle defile of the Matanikau River. "Into the Valley" is the story of their one-day march into that jungle and out of it again—at the same spot. On the jacket, the publisher asks the reader when he is through with the book to send it to some man in the service. That won't be easy for most readers, for this is the kind of book one reads, puts on the shelf, and then reads again. Hersey tells a story of entrapment in the jungle, of hopeless battle with an invisible enemy, of defeat, of panic, of men who conquer panic, of retreat, and of unarmed men who walk to hell and back to bring out dying comrades. The Marines in this book are not motion-picture devil dogs. They are simple American boys, and Hersey's story about them will be part of the abiding literature of this war. It is written with the art that conceals art so completely that there is nothing to say about it. But for those who are more interested in a brush than a painting, here is a hint: Observe how the too-long sketch of the boyhood of Captain Rigaud builds a sense of impending tragedy that covers the whole expedition.

"Headhunting in the Solomon Islands" can be looked at either as a talkative narration of peacetime travel in the Solomons by a young woman portrait painter and her girl friend, gifted with the valor of ignorance and a bright sense of comedy—frightened by bushy-haired natives, smitten by jungle diseases—or as an ironic epilogue to the war books. Black headhunters who used to crack the craniums of Australian tax collectors with cocoanuts now hide timidly in the hills, watching Americans and Japanese rip each other to pieces on the steaming hot sands. Save as a place to kill or be killed in, nobody reading these four books would give ten cents for the whole of this malarial, dysenteric, skin-rotting hellhole. Apart from its unplanned irony, the best thing in the headhunting book is the scattered whimsical drawings of native scenes, full of vitality and rhythm, much more successful than the larger paintings. Miss Mytinger gets striking impressions of character, her portraits often resulting in convincing native heads. Otherwise, the sense of form is watery, but this may be due to the difficulty of completing the painting before the model left to acquire an extra head.

IRVING BRANT

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Merry-Go-Round of Opinion

Brownstone Eclogues, by Conrad Aiken. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce. 99 pages. $2.

CONRAD AIKEN has been writing poetry for more than twenty-five years. Perhaps, then, it is not beside the point to consider the difficulties of his poetic career, and the inexhaustible variety of misunderstanding to which he, like most poets, has been subjected. Like most true poets, he has written a deal of bad poetry; for most poets the writing of bad poetry is a necessary stage on the way to new good poetry. Yet each time a new volume of his verse has appeared, the same clichés of misunderstanding have been brought forward, in new dress, or in the same old dress, if the reviewer is tired. When Aiken's last book, "And in the Human Heart," appeared, it was attacked and condemned without reservation by Mr. Randall Jarrell and Miss Louise Bogan, both practising poets. And that is just the point: when you are a practising poet, your own poetry is bound to be an obstacle between you as a critic and the work of poets who are doing something quite different.

Yet twenty-five years is a long and probing time and in that time a number of readers of verse at least as perceptive as Miss Bogan and Mr. Jarrell have found a good deal in Aiken as a poet. T. S. Eliot, R. P. Blackmur, Marianne Moore, Allen Tate, and lastly, but most of all, James Joyce (our poor dead King!) have expressed considerable admiration of one kind or another for Aiken's poetry. In fact, Joyce shortly before his death asked with considerable impatience and irritation, apparently, why a long poem of Aiken's had not arrived from America, the greatest conceivable compliment, it seems to me, that an author of our time can enjoy. Now, for another turn of

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the screw of critical disagreement, Mr. Jarrell and Miss Bogan have expressed much admiration for Eliot, R. P. Blackmur, Miss Moore, Tate and Joyce not only as creative authors, but as true and authoritative readers of poetry.

The upshot is not merely confusion, for by a close scrutiny of this new volume of poems one can see just how the character of Aiken's verse provokes misunderstanding, unless it is read with much care and sympathy. "Brownstone Eclogues" marks a new stage in Aiken. There is a new concreteness in it; the imagery is derived from metropolitan life, from hospitals, amusement parks, churches, parks, theatre marquees, taxis and radios. And, as often in Aiken, the surface of the writing is "too poetic": too rich, too decorated and too lyrical. This is the reason why Aiken is often admired for the wrong reasons by people who have just begun to read verse, who think of verse as merely pretty language, whose taste has been formed and frozen by admiration of the rich descriptions of Keats. And this is another of the reasons why Jarrell and Miss Bogan condemn Aiken as merely rhetorical. But underneath the overrich surface of Aiken's poetry there is another and original richness, a richness of attitude and feeling. Aiken's chief theme has always been lostness, the isolation of one human being from another, even in love, the isolation of man in the universe, the chaos and lostness the self finds within itself in the abyss of memory or futurity. The peak of this obsession with metaphysical aloneness (it is worth remembering that Aiken was once a student of Santayana's) is to be found in "Preludes for Memnon" (1931) and "Time in the Rock" (1936). But in those volumes, the lostness was that of a man within the endless universe or "within the labyrinth of another's being." "Brownstone Eclogues" brings forward the obsessive theme to regions of daily modern life. With the new subject matter, there is an increasing freshness of attitude and perception. For example, in the first stanza of "Dear Uncle Stranger," we get the old theme of the self confronting itself in the mirror, a much used and overworked poetic situation:

> All my shortcomings, in this year of grace,
> preach, and at midnight, from my mirrored face,
> the arrogant, strict dishonesty, that lies
> behind the animal forehead and the eyes.

The title itself may seem trite; how often the self has addressed itself as a stranger; but here the self also addresses itself as *dear uncle* (the self looks like an uncle to itself in middle age). And when we look closely at the above lines, the same opening into originality is clear. The shortcomings are not merely painful, as a trite poet would say; they *preach;* the dishonesty is not merely furtive, as a trite poet would say; the dishonesty is *arrogant* and *strict;* the forehead is not tritely intellectual; it is *animal,* it is the agent of lust and anger. The stanza's insight is: our shortcomings preach dishonesty to us. They make us arrogantly and strictly dishonest. And thus the poet proceeds, throughout this new volume. If there are but a few poems here as good as the best in "Time in the Rock," if Aiken still writes too easily and too much, we must remember that a poet cannot go in a straight line, like an arrow; and that writing a great deal is one way of developing and revising. This volume is a new beginning and poets are only finished when they are incapable of the daring of a new beginning.

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

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A Reader's List

LITTLE CHINA: THE ANNAMESE LANDS, by Alan Houghton Brodrick (Oxford, $5.50). In 1939 the author traveled through the Annamese-speaking districts of Indo-China, where Chinese traditions have longest survived, and in southwest China. Mr. Brodrick therefore styles this a "travel book"; but since the traveler is a scholar, every turn in the road, view or encounter furnishes occasion for comment on history, customs, economy, language, archeology, art. Readability compensates in part for the lack of coherent arrangement of informative material. Chronological and other tables, an appendix and an excellent index provide guidance to the valuable data contained in the first comprehensive work on this area predicated on ethnologic rather than political boundaries.

A LATIN AMERICAN SPEAKS, by Luis Quintanilla (Macmillan, $2.50). An excellent and deeply stirring book about the Americas, by the Minister Plenipotentiary and Counselor of the Mexican Embassy in Washington. Dr. Quintanilla discusses the history and past relations of the American countries as a background to his project for their future, which is a Pan American Union Now and Socialism (a word which does not terrify him) but even if you discount his solution, the book is eminently worthwhile. The author, who is also a poet and playwright, has the mixture of political experience and cultural interests so common in Latin America and so rare in our own country, and his entire book is written on a high moral plane that is rare in our time. Complete with a moving dedication to the people of Republican Spain and several excellent appendices, including essential statistics on the Latin American republics and a good bibliography of inter-American relations.

THE NAZI STATE, by William Ebenstein (Farrar and Rinehart, $2.75). A highly competent history of Nazism and a study of the Nazi idea of government as it is applied to almost every phase of German existence. The author is an American professor of Political Science. He believes that we are going to have a tough time with the Germans for some years to come, even with the best imaginable peace set-up. The writing is pretty solemn but generally clear.

DESTROYER FROM AMERICA, by John Fernald (Macmillan, $1.75). The latest in what seems to be the new form for war literature, the modest personal record of action. Lieutenant Fernald, a navigator on one of the destroyers traded to Britain by America, describes the routine life on the boat: the all-important personal relations, the anxiety to get into action, the day-to-day work, and the final crisis when the destroyer encounters a submarine, escapes destruction and miraculously brings a torpedoed merchant ship into harbor with its precious cargo. The style is clipped, unemotional and, for a non-professional writer, quite good, but a number of recent books along similar lines, among them Nicholas Monsarrat's "H. M. Corvette," have been superior jobs.

ARROWS INTO THE SUN, by Jonreed Lauritzen (Knopf, $2.50). A first novel about the Navajos, centering on the quarter-breed character Sigor, who is torn between the conflicting pulls of Navajo and white civilizations. He falls in love with a Mormon girl and leaves the Navajos, but at every crisis he resolves to leave the whites and go back to the Indians, spending the rest of his life fighting with them in what he knows to be their futile struggle, "shooting arrows into the sun." The Indians are treated with dignity and knowledge, and segments of the writing have a real beauty, but most of the time the novel is confused and ineffective, so that the author's characteristic way of showing Sigor's divided loyalties is to show him shooting Indians with the whites, and then running over and shooting on the other side.

Contributors

IRVING DILLIARD, one of the first nine Nieman Fellows at Harvard, has been an editorial writer for The St. Louis Post-Dispatch since 1930.

EVE MERRIAM has contributed verse to Poetry, The New Yorker, The Atlantic Monthly, Voices and other magazines.

GEORGE P. WEST has worked on newspapers in San Francisco, Chicago and New York and for the United Press as White House correspondent. For eight years he was associate editor of The San Francisco (Scripps-Howard) News. He now lives at Los Gatos.

SGT. ALAN STERN was editor-in-chief of the Dartmouth Jack-o-Lantern in 1940-41. Soon after graduating, in 1941, he was inducted into the army, and is now stationed at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma. He writes that the idea for "Dear Mr Anthony" is based on an incident that happened at Camp Lee. This is his first professionally published piece.

EDITH HENRICH recently became the first person to win the two annual awards of the Poetry Society of America for the best poems submitted anonymously. She has contributed to various poetry magazines throughout the country.

GUITTONE ZANNUTELLI is the pseudonym of a well known Italian journalist living in this country.

IRVING BRANT is in the Washington office of The Chicago Sun. He is the author, among other books, of "James Madison: The Virginia Revolutionist."

DELMORE SCHWARTZ's new long poem, "Genesis," will be published in April by New Directions. He is a Briggs-Copeland instructor in English composition at Harvard.

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